The Spanking Wench

(And Other Dark Fantasy BDSM Spanking Tales)

By Yu May and Jezebeth Noir

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Preface

These spanking stories were all commissioned by JezebethNoir, who provided the character concepts, overall plot direction, and general feedback on the final product. The first three stories exist within a shared dystopian, dark fantasy universe which was conceptualized by JezebethNoir.

All characters and concepts in the first three stories, except where otherwise stated, are the creations and intellectual property of JezebethNoir.

The final two stories are inspired by characters and concepts from the fictional universe of *The First Vampire*, as conceived by AstralTower. *The First Vampire* was first published as a voting-based story game on DeviantArt, with user feedback directing the course of the narrative. *The Breaking of Princess Alesia* is a reimagining of scenes from parts 57-58. *The Decoration* took broader inspiration from

characters and concepts at several different points across the narrative's history. All characters and concepts original to *The First Vampire* are the intellectual property of AstralTower.

With their permission, I have been permitted to publish these stories in this collection and bring them to a new audience.

Content warning:

All stories in this collection feature heavy BDSM themes, including depictions of sexual servitude, torture, and degradation. This book is only intended for adult readers. Reader discretion is advised.

The Spanking Wench

By Yu May and Jezebeth Noir

Chapter I

On the Ritual Flogging of Temple Wenches: A Report on Halfling Religious Practices

By John Wilkes

As John Wilkes stepped off the high-speed train, he took a breath of fresh air. Compared to the inner city, the halfling suburbs were relatively less polluted. He could even catch a glimpse of the yellowish sky between the lines of concrete high-rise apartment complexes. John adjusted his clerical collar, then tapped a button on his briefcase. With a flurry of clicks and whistles, the briefcase unfolded and reshaped itself into a plastic drone with the appearance of a toy fairy with dragonfly wings. Impatiently, John tapped the screen that represented the drone's face as it flickered to life. It blinked its eyes once, and when John saw the drone's eyes flash red to indicate it was recording, he

cleared his throat and began to speak into his microphone earpiece. “Hello, internet. In my never-ending quest for knowledge on minor cults and religions of the world, I’ve just arrived at the historic halfling quarter. Aren’t the quaint chimneys simply charming?”

In the background behind John Wilkes, one of the “quaint” chimneys belched out thick black smoke, as if on cue. Automatically, the drone turned its head to capture scenic footage. “In this time of steady spiritual decline, it is important for us to learn all we can about historic religious practices. Today, I’ve been invited to witness a provincial halfling temple ceremony! Now I know plenty of you have been posting memes in my comment section asking me to cover this halfling religion…” John Wilkes blushed at the memory of some of the memes he’d seen, all of which seemed to involve some variation on halflings merrily spanking a scandalously under-dressed elf, but forced himself to remain focused. “…but there is surprisingly little

academic research on this particular group. As usual, *John Wilkes' 'Booth': The Blog for Religious Revival* is at the cutting edge of religious studies! To my knowledge this will be the first recording ever permitted of such a ceremony! I'm expecting to meet the priestess, Lady Mother Bridget Füdlewhopper, any minute now..."

John Wilkes glanced nervously around the empty train station. Sure, violent crime was comparatively low in the halfling suburbs...but only compared to the inner city. Suddenly, a tall female figure appeared on camera behind him. The drone beeped a warning, but not before the huge woman put a dark hand across his mouth. Wilkes tried to wail, but the woman's grip was unbreakable, and her hand muffled his cries.

"Shush! You're the cleric, right? Don't attract attention!" growled the woman in a husky, commanding voice. When Wilkes nodded, she

released her grip and spun him around roughly to look him in the eyes.

Wilkes swallowed and glanced the woman up and down. Her eyes were piercing silver, the same color as her hair, and her skin was a midnight shade of blue-black. A dark elf? Her clothes were sleek black leather, lined with spikes, like a bandit from one of the many roving motorcycle gangs that plagued the outskirts of the city. Wilkes fumbled for his wallet, then dropped it. “I don’t have much money!”

“No, no! I’m here to escort you to the Temple of the Lady. Priestess Füdlewhopper sent me. Now, get a hold of yourself!” snapped the woman.

Wilkes shut his mouth with a snap. Of course, it could be a lie, but now that he thought of it, dark elves weren’t known for being common bandits. He’d never met a dark elf before, but the ones he’d heard of all had powerful positions in government, corporations, and religious societies around the world. One wasn’t likely to stoop to common

thievery. And as he examined her outfit more closely, he immediately got the impression that this elf was someone important. “Who are you? What’s your name?”

The dark elf narrowed her eyes. “...My name is unimportant. Follow me, and keep your mouth shut. I don’t want us seen.”

Wilkes stumbled after the dark elf as she glided away. He couldn’t help but notice that she was well-muscled for a woman, and that her sleek outfit did nothing to disguise her wide, swaying hips. “Are you with the temple? What’s your role? Do the halflings have any...priestly duties reserved for dark—”

Wilkes felt his question die in his throat as the dark elf flashed him a furious look. He expected her to censure him for asking stupid questions, but the look said more than words ever could. John swallowed and nodded, before following behind her like a sheep. Clearly, the Priestess had sent a

powerful emissary to guide him. *Well, of course they did. After all, I run an important blog!* thought John.

***

The dark elf priestess guided John through the back streets of the suburb, avoiding the main road. Twice, they ducked into an alley to dodge being spotted by local halflings. As he peeked his head around a dumpster, spotting a family of halflings before they disappeared around the corner, Wilkes decided to risk asking another question. “Does your church have a lot of enemies? Are we in danger?”

The dark elf slammed him roughly into the dumpster. “Of course not! But if the locals spot you, it will mean…a lot of annoying questions.” As she uttered the final words, she glanced around cagily.

"But...I want to talk to the local halflings. The whole reason I'm here is to learn about your religion!"

Something about the way the dark elf looked at him made John think she could easily break him in two if she wanted. Finally, she sighed. "Look, we don't have much time before the parishioners arrive for morning service. And all the local halflings who practice the faith will be at the temple anyway, so you'd just be wasting time."

Feeling stupid, Wilkes nodded and allowed himself to be led to an older part of town. As he spotted a magnificent building in red brick, he started to get excited. It reminded him of historic documents of ancient halfling temples, before the industrial revolution wiped out most of the old world. Finally, he felt he was getting to the roots of an authentic, traditional religion! "That's a handsome temple! There's something undeniably 'halfling' about it."

The dark elf raised an eyebrow as she spotted the building John was pointing at, then sighed. “That’s the bank, you fool. Here’s the temple.”

Grabbing Wilkes by the scruff of his clerical collar, the dark elf pulled him into a dark, narrow alley, then slammed a button connected to a dingy garage door. The opener groaned sadly as the garage door lifted, and the dark elf shoved him into a dimly lit, windowless room.

The moment Wilkes straightened up, the top of his skull banged against a low wooden rafter. He blinked as harsh artificial lights blared to life, blinding him.

At first, Wilkes thought he was trapped in a dungeon. Then as his vision cleared, he realized with a thrill that this must be an authentic halfling temple! The walls were made of marble, an alabaster sculpture of a goddess stood on a pedestal, and a circular mosaic of glittering gems rested before the goddess!

...But then he noticed the way the light shimmered off the walls, as though they were wrapped in plastic. Still having to bow his head low, John rested a hand against the wall to support himself. It was only waxy wallpaper, imitating the look of genuine marble.

Wilkes started when he heard the dark elf's voice barking at him from behind. When he turned, he found her crouching on her heels, like a tigress ready to pounce. "Well, here you are. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm retiring to my personal quarters to meditate before the service."

Wilkes glanced up to find the low ceiling wasn't finished, and realized he must have cracked his head against one of the exposed support beams from the floor above. Of course, the temple was sized for halfling parishioners. "I...think I need to sit down."

Before he could, the dark elf arose to her feet and gripped his collar again, pulling him close with a single twist of her fist. "Don't you dare! It's an

insult to the goddess to be seated in her presence. Just lean against the wall until the priestess—"

The rumble and clank of another garage door interrupted her. Wilkes searched the room for the source of the noise and noticed a second door tucked behind the statue of the goddess, hiding a secret passageway. While the temple's 175-centimeter-high ceiling would be considered roomy for halflings but cramped for big people, the 100-centimeter-high tunnel looked claustrophobic even for halflings.

With a series of grating clicks, the janky garage door stuck in place. A male halfling, half-hidden behind the garage door, cursed. Then he landed a sharp kick to the bottom of the door, and it sprang to life, rising out of the way. A gruff-looking halfling with a mustache and cap entered the temple, pushing a janitor's cart. "Bleedin' door never works."

A middle-aged halfling woman followed him, wearing a simple flowing robe and a nylon cord

across her shoulders. She rolled her eyes as she examined the offending garage door. “Yes, if only the temple employed someone whose sole job was to keep it fixed.”

“I told you already, I’m a handyman, not a temple guard...wait a minute...” The handyman froze as he caught the halfling woman’s wry smile. His face turning red, the handyman pulled a spray can of lubricant from his belt and examined the door. “It ain’t sticking on account of me not tending to it. The door sticks on account of it being over 50 years old. Something you might be able to appreciate, Priestess!”

At the mention of the word “priestess,” Wilkes examined the middle-aged halfling woman and finally recognized her. It was Lady Mother Bridget Füdlewhopper, though the profile pic he’d seen of her from the temple’s “Contact Us” page was probably 20 years out of date.

Wilkes tapped his drone to make sure it was awake and still recording. Then he bumped his head again as he stumbled forward to shake the priestess' hand. "Madam Füdlewhopper! It's a pleasure to finally meet you. I'm John Wilkes, the writer who reached out to you. I was wondering if you could answer a few questions I have about—OUCH!"

The priestess narrowed her eyes and ignored his hand. "Oh, it's you. The blogger. Please, call me Bridget. That 'madam' nonsense makes me sound like an old lady. Mr. Sandiman, fetch me the remote! I'll need to breeze through the Pixiepoint presentation for welcoming first-time visitors before the service starts."

Sandiman, the handyman, did not look away from his work at the garage door. "The remote's taped up behind the statue of the Blessed Lady. Fetch it yourself!"

Bridget sniffed, then reached behind the pillar of the halfling goddess: "The Lady." It was a charming

image of a merry-looking halfling woman wearing a laurel crown and simple robe, holding a bundle of birches in her hands. The flogging implement appeared to have been painted realistically, to resemble real-life wooden sticks. Though now that John could get a better look at it, he realized the image of the goddess was made of cheap plaster, not alabaster, and the circular mosaic before it was made from simple cobblestone, not gemstones.

Cursing, Bridget fumbled with the remote, and a dusty overhead projector popped out of the ceiling. "Where is the temple wench? We can't greet our 'distinguished guest' properly without her."

John nodded stupidly. "Ah! I get to meet one of your elven flagellants?"

Sandiman finally turned away from his work. "Eh, flatu-whats?"

Bridget sighed. "He means a spanking wench, Sandiman."

Sandiman shrugged. “Oh, it sounded like he said ‘flatulence.’ Just to warn you, the Lady of Laughter considers that sort of thing to be the lowest form of comedy.”

Bridget patted Wilkes’ hand as though he was an exceptionally large, exceptionally stupid child. “No one calls them ‘flagellants’ anymore, dear. We don’t like using archaic terms for temple wenches. Gives them ideas above their station.”

John turned to find his dark elven guide and found her cowering in the corner, nearly invisible outside the path of blaring fluorescent light aimed at the idol of the goddess. “And you, ma’am? Will you be...assisting with the punishment?”

“Nooooo...” whimpered the dark elf.

Bridget finally spotted the dark elf. “Ah, there’s the spanking wench! What are you doing skulking in the corner? Get over here, and assume the position!”

As the dark elf shuffled out of her corner, John noticed she had to hunch over in a permanent bow, thanks to the low ceiling. She danced a little on the balls of her feet, as though each step was painful for her.

Wilkes blinked. “Um, what spanking wench? This is...come to think of it, I never caught your name?”

As Wilkes tried to meet her eyes, the dark elf stared at the ground.

Bridget snickered. “What are you talking about? She has no name. She’s just a spanking wench.”

As he finally put two and two together, John felt like a schoolboy who’d been forced to wear a dunce cap. Of course, in all the memes, halflings spanked elven maidens. But the dark elf’s poise and grace had been so mesmerizing, it hadn’t occurred to him that she might be the one on the receiving end.

Finally, Bridget found the button she was looking for on the remote. The overhead projector flickered

to life, and words in bold, garish letters shone onto the white wall above the idol: "Welcome to Our Temple: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about the Lady of Love, the Lady of Laughter, and the Lady of Lashes, But Were Too Afraid to Ask!" As Bridget looked back and forth from the sheepish dark elf to the confused blogger, she smiled knowingly. "Ah, how adorable. What lies have you been telling our guest, wench?"

The dark elf tensed, then reached behind her back to shield her ample bottom. "I didn't tell him any lies, honest!"

"And what are you wearing? That's not your temple uniform. Have you been stealing from the temple alms box?"

The elf's eyes went wide. "No, no, no! This is just...an outfit I picked up for when I'm taking walks outdoors, not when I'm on duty."

"Sandiman, did you let her have that? Temple wenches aren't supposed to own any property without approval from a Priestess."

The handyman finished greasing the garage door and slammed it shut. "Eh? Can't say I recall. I suppose I've seen her throwing some sort of jacket on when she's out for a walk."

"Then you should have informed me. It's my prerogative as this temple's priestess to permit any changes to the spanking wench's wardrobe."

"I ain't a temple guard, so it ain't my job to tell the wench what she can wear, one way or t'other! And even if it were, you ain't been here to ask for a week. Ain't my fault you're off at other temples all the time."

Bridget sniffed, then with a glance at the statue of her goddess, took a deliberate, calming breath. Then she spun on her heels to glare at the dark elf

like a stern mother. “Wench, take off that foolish outfit immediately.”

Frowning, the dark elf clutched at the collar of her leather jacket, her voice cracking. “But…I didn’t steal it! I only—”

Bridget clicked her tongue. “Goodness, do I have to remind you of your vows to the Goddess?”

The effect was instant. The dark elf unzipped her jacket and stepped out of her biker pants. Although the dark elf was indeed well-muscled, Wilkes realized her tight leather uniform had also served to disguise a layer of puppy fat.

Then Wilkes noticed she was wearing a thin sash in place of a bra. Her only undergarments were a thin cord with a narrow rectangular flap of cloth covering her front and behind, like an oriental fundoshi. Both articles of clothing were white, with soft accents of vermillion, contrasting sharply against the dark elf’s blue-black skin. The negligee

did almost nothing to hide the elf's bouncy, bluish buttocks.

Gingerly, the dark elf dropped her clothes on the ground, but when she heard Priestess Bridget clear her throat and tap her foot, the frightened wench quickly dropped to her knees, folded the clothes neatly, and offered them up.

Wilkes practically choked at the sight of the nameless, supplicant dark elf before him. "Are...are you going to punish her?"

Bridget hooted as she accepted the neatly folded, forbidden leather outfit. "Punish her? Oh no, 'punishment' is such a cruel word. The Lady commands us that a wench need only be tamed with kindness. Of course, we do spank the wenches plenty. But that's their sacred, joyful duty. After all, spanking is not a punishment, but rather an eternal reward...for a spanking wench, at least. Sandiman! Be a dear, and put these clothes with the implements. And fetch the wooden horse while

you're at it. I think the wench would benefit from it immensely!"

Sandiman was so pleased at the mention of the wooden horse that he forgot to complain about his job description. He sang as he disappeared down the narrow passageway. "By the Lady, we haven't used the wooden horse in an age and a day! What fun! A spanking bench, for the spanking wench!"

The dark elf's lip trembled. "No! Please, not the horsey! Not now!"

Before, the dark elf had given Wilkes the impression of being an ancient, beautiful queen: centuries old, yet untouched by time. Now the same elf looked like a terrified brat sentenced to a spanking for stealing sweets.

Bridget clicked her tongue and snapped her fingers. With a flourish, the white nylon cords draped around the priestess' shoulders began to glow softly, then floated lazily in the air between her and the

terrified wench. “Don’t worry, we’re not going to use the horse now. We’ll save it for later, to give the parishioners a proper show. Right now, I’ll have you assume the standard position before the altar.”

Powered by a magic spell, the two cords began to bind the dark elf automatically. Wilkes recognized it as a common trick rope, the sort of everyday magic even commoners could afford. One cord tied itself around each of the dark elf’s wrists, the other around each of her ankles, leaving the captive elf enough wiggle room to move freely. The wench moaned with humiliation, then crawled on her hands and knees to kneel on the cobblestone mosaic before the idol of the goddess.

As the elf lowered her head to the ground and lifted her bountiful backside high into the air, it dawned on Wilkes that the mosaic circle represented an altar, and the sacrifice being offered up on the altar...was the wench’s ass. Across the elf’s plump posterior, he could make out faded red marks in

thin, straight lines, all criss-crossing over one another in a fiery pattern.

The priestess climbed up a carved step at the base of the idol's pillar and snatched up the birch bundle in the goddess' hand. Wilkes felt stupid for not noticing it before. Of course, the birches were always handy when it was time for a flogging, as if the Goddess was merrily offering them to her faithful followers with a wry wink.

Bridget delivered the first *whack* with the birch bundle, before fumbling with the remote to click to the next slide of her presentation. "Welcome, guest, to the Temple of the Lady. Here, we honor the Lady of Love! The Lady of Laughter! The Lady of Lashes!" Bridget delivered three firm *whacks* to the dark elf's behind to punctuate each of these sacred titles for the goddess. The elf grunted and hummed, but seemed resolved not to break down crying.

Bridget clicked to the next slide, which depicted a heroic-looking halfling soldier wielding a sword.

Kneeling at his feet was a dark elf wearing a flowing red cape and little else. “Now, why don’t we begin at the beginning? ...Our church was founded by halflings under the protection of the Goddess, who charged the first disciples to punish some silly dark elf who had been getting into mischief...”

“Wait, is that supposed to be the Hero of Legend?”

Bridget swelled her chest. “You are surprisingly astute. The Hero of Legend is our first patron saint.”

“Then that dark elf must be the Red Mistress...the sorceress?”

“Hmm? Oh, I suppose that was one of her fancy titles before the Hero put her in her proper place. We prefer to call her ‘The Red-Bottomed Missy.’ Or just ‘Missy’ for short...”

Bridget swung the birch bundle across the spanking wench’s backside with such force that the amazonian dark elf’s whole body rocked forward

from the impact. She winced, but only emitted a low groan.

Bridget clicked the button on her remote control. "Next slide..."

...

Once upon a time, the spanking wench had been the CEO of the Megwandir Family Conglomerate, which allowed her to enjoy every possible pleasure wealth and power could provide, until she grew bored. She herself had been the eldest surviving matriarch of the Megwandir family, but she had renounced her name when she entered the service of the halfling Goddess. In the years since, she had even come to think of herself as the spanking wench, even in her most private moments. Of course, she hadn't forgotten her name; it just seemed more fitting, especially when she was meditating before the Lady of Love, the Lady of Laughter, and the Lady of Lashes...her Lady.

At the crack of dawn, a few hours before John Wilkes' train was due to arrive at the halfling quarter, the wench found herself seated before the Lady. Well, not quite seated. The temple had provided her with a wedge-shaped "seat" for her meditation, but it had been deliberately fashioned so that when the wench sat on it, it angled her bottom upward to provide a better view for any visitors to the temple. Furthermore, the cushion of the seat was a bed of stinging nettles. So the wench had to constantly float her bottom a few inches above her seat, before exhaustion forced her to rest her weight on the stinging leaves. After a few seconds, the nettles would begin to itch, forcing her to raise her bottom, and the process would begin all over again.

Sometimes the wench reflected on her past life, sometimes she wept and prayed as she considered her present plight, and other times she considered her future: a millennium of voluntary slavery as a spanking wench. And after death, her only eternal

reward would be to continue her service as a spanking wench in the heavenly chambers: to be spanked by the Goddess herself.

Of course, the wench had chosen this life willingly. It hadn't been easy to become a spanking wench. The High Priestess and her council rejected most applicants, and all but the most determined of dark elf maidens were eliminated by the screening process, which included, but was not limited to, giving the would-be wenches merciless floggings to warn them precisely what they had in store.

The wench blushed as she remembered her training regime, all of which had been televised as a reality TV game show by the First Halfling Temple: *Who Wants to Be a Spanking Wench?* (Halflings are nothing if not creative entrepreneurs, with a knack for show business.)

Nevertheless, the wench had persisted, leaving behind her life as a literal girlboss, leaving behind all the prestige, privilege, and power that came with

the Megwandir family name. There were days that the wench yearned to receive the long, hard spanking she always wanted, from the Lady herself. There were even nights, to her own horror, when the wench dreamed of being whipped to death.

Sometimes she dreamed of receiving that divine retribution alone in her cramped cell behind the altar, and longed to touch herself. But every night the handyman would secure her bonds tightly to deny her the opportunity to do anything about her wet dreams. For the first few years of her service, the wench had been kept in a constant, agonizing, wonderful state of endless titillation without release.

But today the wench was bored. She hadn't been spanked properly in days, except for a quick caning a parishioner had given her last night.

Ideally, the tradition for the spanking wenches, going back to the founding of the religion, was that

their bottoms were always to be kept an even shade of red for as long as they lived.

Except for the handyman, the local cabbage merchant lady was the only daily visitor the wench could expect at the halfling temple. Even Lady Mother Bridget Füdlewhopper only visited once a week, since she had to work at several provincial temples. There wasn't even a proper temple guard to keep the wench from attempting to escape. It wasn't as though the wench wanted to escape, but still, it was nice to know you were wanted!

To occupy her mind, the wench fantasized about how, assuming she had a temple guard, she might make a daring escape attempt. How fun it would be to dart away from the adorable little halfling, only for him to catch her in the end and spank her for her trouble. Not a punishment spanking, of course, but only a loving reminder to gently guide the errant wench back to her proper station in life. The wench purred at the thought and pressed her

weight down against the stinging nettles, trying to perfect the illusion.

However, as the wench broke her concentration on the statue of the Lady and examined her backside, she started to have second thoughts about wanting to be spanked. After all, Bridget had flogged her mercilessly only last week. Faint silver scars were still visible across her bottom. (It was well known that dark elves were gifted with remarkable healing abilities, though the jury was still out whether their hindquarters were especially gifted.)

The wench pouted. It seemed she was either being spanked far too harshly or not nearly enough.

Sometimes the wench liked to play the role of a whiny crybaby during her frequent ritual spankings. Pretending to mewl and sob was one way to break the tedium. But last week Bridget had been determined to make a lasting impression on the wench.

The wench tried to think back to the cruel beating she'd experienced a week ago. She remembered being tied securely to a spanking bench, and the howls of laughter at her expense as the temple-goers watched her futile struggle. She remembered how she'd howled and roared but had refused to cry.

If only she could hold back her tears, at least she could have been spared the final indignity of hearing additional mockery. But the willow cane had finally broken her resolve, and after the first two tears fell, she had broken down into open sobs. "Please, let me go! I can't take anymore!"

It wasn't that she was afraid of being spanked. That part of the job had been what attracted her interest in the first place. In fact, the wench prided herself on her ability to take a beating. It was more the humiliation of being mocked that wore at her...though it was also nice to be the center of attention. Pain she could take. Insults she could bear. Exposure she could endure. But something

about the combination of all three made her break down crying like a little girl.

Bridget had paused the caning. The wench had been tempted to demand to see the High Priestess and petition to be released from her service to the Lady. But at the last moment the wench had thought better of it. She had learned long ago it never did any good to make demands and empty threats, and she didn't want to be mocked for her faithlessness and cowardice. Bridget had gently patted the wench's bottom before adding, "You can't take anymore? Can you imagine how tired my arm is getting? You don't hear me complaining!"

Then the caning began again, and long after the wench thought she could not possibly endure another stroke, she was forced to endure them anyway. It was the first time since she'd joined the temple that the spanking wench began to have second thoughts about her vocation.

Remembering how she had once been in charge of meting out strict discipline, the former matriarch fumed. That punishment had been far too harsh! When the dark elf had been a free woman and a mother, she had never hesitated to punish her daughter with a good hard spanking. But never in her wildest dreams had she imagined using such sadistic punishments as the halflings regularly meted out to their temple wenches…not on fellow dark elf family members, at least.

Sure, she might subject enemies of the family to torture, especially during the old wild days, before the race of men had raised up their great cities across all four corners of the world.

Torture was all too common back in the good old days. But that was mostly for business, not just pleasure. And why break an enemy with something as blunt as physical pain when it was so much more elegant to outsmart them? What could be more

punishing for an enemy than to live on, knowing they had been beaten soundly at their own game?

Then the wench corrected herself. Of course, for halflings, spanking wasn't thought of as a method of punishment at all, at least not for a spanking wench.

As the itching sensation from the stinging nettles built to a sharp burn, the wench squeaked and lifted herself up off her cushion.

Looking up at the goddess, the wench sighed contentedly. Of course, if she really, truly wanted to leave, she could.

If she ran away, the police would catch her eventually and drag her back to the temple, but sooner or later she might escape permanently. Generally speaking, slavery was outlawed by the state, but forms of voluntary and religious slavery had been grandfathered into the law. A runaway slave was viewed like a runaway child: they were the

legal wards of their owner, whether secular or religious.

Then again, running away meant living life as an outlaw. Far better to make her appeal to the High Priestess' Council and ask to be released from her Oath of Service to the Goddess.

Sure, she might be whipped to within an inch of her life to discourage her from recanting the faith, but in the end the Council didn't want any dark elven maids to serve as spanking wenches unless they were committed to the vocation.

Demanding a hearing with the High Priestess was the simpler solution to her dilemma, but by no means was it any easier. It would probably take anywhere from weeks to decades for her case to be heard, and she could expect plenty of ferocious spankings in the meantime to gently encourage her to abandon her plans to become an apostate of the church.

The nameless wench reflected on the tales she'd heard over the years of the first spanking wench: the former Queen known as the Red Mistress, who was fated to be remembered only as "the red-bottomed missy" by halflings. Some stories said that the first wench was accidentally flogged to death, while others claimed that her lust for pain became so great she finally requested that fate of her own free will. Others said that the red-bottomed missy finally succeeded in freeing herself from the control of the halfling temple, or was cast out by the council, only to spend the rest of her days seeking reentry into the temple's services as a spanking wench.

The halflings made it hard for any elf to become a temple wench because they only wanted to accept true believers, those ready to commit for life. And every temple wench knew that, even if she did manage to secure her freedom, she'd never be allowed back into communion with the halflings. In the eyes of the Lady, such an unfaithful elf would be forever lost: a spanking would do her no good.

As she settled her weight fully back down on the nettles, the wench felt the leaves impress into the puppy fat of her lower cheeks and thighs, and the fiery prickling sensation returned. Tears welled in the wench's eyes as she fixed her eyes on the Goddess. "Oh, my Lady, please, I do want to be a good spanking wench. Help me learn to be thankful for my spankings, and endure them. Amen!"

Her reverie was interrupted by halfling curses as the handyman struggled to open the sticky overhead door that led to the hidden passage and the wench's cell. "Confusticate and bebother these doors!"

The wench sighed. "Morning, Master Sandiman. I don't suppose you'd be willing to give me a quick thrashing? My backside is barely red anymore."

Sandiman harrumphed as he jiggled the door. "I'm no temple guard, wench. My job's to fix what's broke around here, not wear out my arm tanning

your hide. If I have something I want to ask of the Goddess, you'll be the first to know."

The wench lifted her hips and wiggled them teasingly. "Oh, are you afraid your arm will give out? Or that your prayers won't please her? It must be hard, asking for anything from a Goddess who prizes wit and whimsy above all else."

Sandiman bit his lip. Later that night he was sure he could come up with a devastating retort, but at the moment his mind was blank. So he instead busied himself on the stuck door.

He jumped when he heard another garage door opening, but not the one he was working on. Priestess Bridget hustled into the temple from the alleyway, waving her staff. "Sandiman! We have a problem! Oh, fiddlesticks, just look at the wench's bottom. It's not red at all! Sandiman, why haven't you tended to it?"

Before Sandiman could answer, the wench perfectly imitated his working-class halfling accent. “He ain’t a temple guard! He’s a handyman!”

Sandiman nodded as he fiddled with a loose screw on the door. “Yeah, I ain’t a temple guard, I’m a—” He did a double take at the wench, blushed furiously, then pretended to work on the door.

Bridget landed a firm clap across one of the wench’s lower butt-cheeks. This caught the wench by surprise, but with a sharp intake of breath she resisted the urge to flinch.

Bridget circled around to wave a finger in the wench’s face. “None of that. You’re getting ideas above your station. Clearly, you haven’t been given enough attention. So I’ll just have to remind you of your proper place. Assume the position.”

Obediently, the wench leaned forward on her hands and knees. But as she lifted her bottom, she made a point of resting her chin casually on her folded

hands, as if she was a playful kitten. “It’s a pity I don’t have a proper temple guard, nor a priestess, who can remind me more often!”

Bridget flashed the wench a furious look. Because so many minor halfling temples were dwindling in membership, Priestess Bridget was forced to act as a circuit preacher, traveling from suburb to suburb to officiate for multiple congregations. All “proper temples” were able to afford their own dedicated Priestess, and sometimes a temple guard. Furthermore, the Temple of the High Priestess kept 11 spanking wenches and also managed to keep all 11 bottoms an even shade of crimson at all times, according to tradition. This was a sore point for Lady Mother Bridget, and both of them knew it.

Bridget scooped up the birch bundle which was always kept ready-at-hand, cradled in the hands of the Goddess’ statue. Amongst halflings, the “gift of gab” was considered a sacred gift. It wasn’t enough to simply pray to the Goddess. And there were only

two things which the Goddess considered a proper offering: a well-spanked elven backside (preferably that of a dark elf), and witty jests and riddling talk.

During her training for the cloth, Bridget had learned a few classic one-liners and basic joke writing, just enough to "warm up" both the crowd and the spanking wench's behind. This was usually enough for day-to-day services. But truly pleasing the Goddess required creative thinking: to tell her a joke she hadn't heard before.

Bridget tapped the wench's bottom a few times, signaling that they were about to begin. "Really, wench, you should remember the words of our Lady: 'When someone strikes you upon one cheek—'" At this, Bridget landed a nasty stroke across the wench's right bottom cheek, "'Turn to her the other also!'" Bridget landed a second, back-handed stroke across the wench's left bottom cheek.

With each blow, ripples traveled through the flesh of the dark elf's dumpy derriere. Hiding her discomfort, the wench glanced over her shoulder. "Hmm, now that you mention it, I think I've heard that one before. A few times, actually!"

Because spanking was never officially used as a punishment by the church, there was no reason the wench couldn't sass, nor tease, nor interrupt during the service. Some halfling theologians even argued this was beneficial, as it encouraged parishioners to think on their feet during the offering. Nevertheless, it always annoyed Bridget when their wench felt the need to steal the show. And if Bridget's witticisms were not always up to scratch, she was sure she could make it up to the goddess by offering her a particularly well-spanked wench.

This time Bridget struck the wench across both her cheeks at once. "And yet the lesson refuses to sink in. If you were half as clever as you think you are, you wouldn't have to be gently reminded so often."

The wench hissed, refusing to scream, and scrambled to think of a comeback. The smarting sensation was making it hard for her to concentrate. "Well, maybe you're not as funny as you think you are, Lady Mother Füdlewhopper."

Bridget grinned as she landed another stroke with the birch, this time holding her arm low and angling upward to catch the wench across her lower bottom, where her chubby cheeks met her tubby thighs. The holy halfling couldn't have asked for a better setup if she'd written it herself. "Wench, if I'm half as funny as I think I am, I'm a riot."

Sandiman snickered, then snorted. Pleased with herself, Bridget decided it was time to wrap up the emergency, last-minute spanking. She landed another spank to get the wench's attention and began again. "Now, wench, if it were up to me, I'd punish you severely for showing such cheek—" A sound *lash* punctuated the word "cheek." The wench grimaced, biting her tongue.

Bridget watched carefully, knowing full well that the wench was trying to tough out her "gentle reminder" without making a sound. "But most fortunately for your butt..." Another *spank*. "...it's not up to me to punish you. My only task is to guide you safely back to the loving lap of the Lady, where you belong..."

For a moment Bridget paused, and the wench looked up longingly at the Goddess, remembering all her earlier doubts and her prayer that morning. Then Bridget took the wench by surprise with another *spank*. "...So that she can bend you over her knee and spank you for all eternity. Can't say I see the appeal, personally, but I suppose you get what's coming to you...in the end!" A firm *strike* punctuated the word "end." The wench had to swallow her scream and clenched her fists.

Sandiman sighed. "Really, Lady Mother. You're using puns? Isn't that the lowest form of comedy?"

Bridget shook her head, then delivered a final, reverberating *spank*. "No, sir! That would be slapstick." Desperate to resist the urge to cry, the wench crossed her eyes and pursed her lips, making a rather absurd expression. The sight of this was enough to crack up Sandiman. He slapped his knees as he fought for breath. The wench felt two tears damp her eyes and quickly pressed her face into the cobblestone mosaic, trying to wipe them away without making it obvious.

As Bridget examined the wench's red-tinted bottom, she wasn't confident that the spanking was long enough to serve as a proper offering for the goddess. But they were short on time, and she determined that it would have to suffice. After putting away the birch bundle, Bridget squeezed the wench lightly under her chin and lifted up her face. Sure, the wench's eyelashes were slightly damp, but the dark elf's refusal to cry always made Bridget nervous. Last week was the first time she'd managed to produce tears, but Bridget knew that underneath

the bratty act, the dark elf still had a stubborn, unbroken spirit.

Bridget shook her head. It was not as if the halfling cared for the dark elf's soul, but she felt it was her sacred duty to free the temple wench from her sinful pride. And Bridget knew that humiliation was just as important a tool as pain when it came to taming temple wenches. "You haven't put on mascara? That won't do. The children love it when the wench's tears make the mascara run down her cheeks."

Bridget pulled a small jar of mascara from her purse and began to apply a heavy coat to the wench's eyelashes. With her bottom still in the air and her chin still pressed against the cold stone floor, the dark elf glowered. She looked as dangerous as she possibly could, given her position.

Satisfied with her makeup job, Bridget fumbled through her purse to find her spare hair ribbons and bows. "And two pigtails would be perfect for

our little piggie! Do you think you could squeal like a pig during the service? That always gets a chuckle from the butchers in the audience…"

As Bridget tried to pull the wench's hair into pigtails, the dark elf recoiled at the sight of the frilly pink bows and pulled her hair away, lifting her bottom higher as she inched backwards. The wench didn't quite leave her position, which would have been a serious breach of protocol, but she came within an inch of doing so. "No! I don't wanna!"

Bridget froze, realizing that the wench was testing her boundaries. Squirming and resisting wasn't exactly discouraged, as the halflings found it funny to watch the wenches writhe. But when a wench disobeyed a priestess, the Goddess commanded that they be gently corrected with a flogging. But they were running short on time, and both of them knew it. Before Bridget could decide how to handle the situation, her phone buzzed. "Fiddle faddle! It's that big, stupid blogger fellow again! Mr.

Sandiman, would you be a dear and meet him at the station?"

Giving up on ever getting the overhead door to work, Sandiman slammed it shut and decided to call it a job well done. "I ain't a messenger boy..."

"I'm a handyman!" said the handyman, the priestess, and the wench all at once.

Bridget rounded on the wench, wanting to thrash the dark elf to within an inch of her life. But the priestess remembered her catechism classes as a youngster and the legend that the first temple wench had accidentally been flogged to death by overzealous halflings. The story's authenticity was hotly debated, but all halfling Priestesses learned the story to teach them the value of self-control (and the charming stupidity of any elf foolish enough to choose the life of a spanking wench). "Wench, you will fetch the big person for me. I'm sure he'll have lots of perfectly obvious questions for you about your duties as a spanking wench."

The wench frowned. “Me? But I have to be here for the service!”

Bridget beamed, then pulled her personal wooden hairbrush out of her purse. She relished the sight of the dark elf eyeing the implement, both knowing what was coming. “Then you’d better trot along! Dismissed!”

The priestess landed a firm *pop*, and the dark elf hopped to her feet. Forgetting herself, the wench ran to the alley-side exit, clutching her bottom, kicking up her feet, and stooping to avoid cracking her noggin on the low ceiling. The last thing she heard was derisive laughter as she ducked out of the temple. Her face burning, the dark elf reached behind the dumpster, seeking the leather uniform she’d secretly stolen from a pile of thrift clothing for a donation drive. She remembered how intensely she’d desired a spanking the moment she stole it, and how she hadn’t cared, wanting the jacket more. She wanted to wear something other than her

absurd temple outfit during the rare moments when she was allowed to roam free.

Usually she enjoyed listening to the halfling's jovial jeers and jests that greeted her wherever she went. But for once, just once, she wanted to remember what it was like to not be a temple wench.

Once upon a time, but not so long ago for a dark elf, she had worn a similar outfit while riding her motorcycle in the desert wilderness that surrounded the concrete jungle of the inner city. At that point in her life she could easily have afforded a limousine and an escort of armored trucks. But something about the freedom of the open road had helped her take her mind off the family business for a little while.

Wincing as she pulled the tight leather pants across her aching ass, the wench thought about the questions she'd have to face when she met this stranger at the train station.

“Let him think whatever he wants!” she murmured.

Pulling up her collar, the dark elf made her way to the train station, careful to avoid notice from any local halflings. Usually she enjoyed hearing the whistles and good-natured teasing as they spotted the local spanking wench out and about. Even though the jokes were all at her expense, she had to admit halflings had a gift for crafting perfect insults. But today she didn’t feel like hearing it.

End of Chapter I

Chapter II

Full Video: Temple Wench Interviewed (And Spanked!)

By John Wilkes

John Wilkes swallowed as he watched the once-proud dark elf whimper and tremble, her lip quivering, her bottom jiggling as the Priestess finished what was apparently only a "warm-up spanking." He looked back up at the Pixiepoint presentation, which featured a cheesy clip-art image of a dark elf bent over in the exact same position as the present-day temple wench before him. "So, you do all this to honor the Red Mistress, the first temple wench?"

Bridget shook her head. "Such a simple question, fitting for such a simple questioner! Of course there's no need to honor the red-bottomed missy. She was only a spanking wench, after all."

Wilkes scratched his head as he examined his notes. "But wasn't she a powerful queen, gifted in dark magic? Didn't she battle the Hero of Legend himself?"

Bridget shrugged. "I suppose. But that was before she became a spanking wench. And really, why should we remember or honor the deeds of some dark queen anyway, just because she had a not-quite-invincible army and got ideas above her station?"

Not quite understanding, Wilkes glanced at his camera drone, but it had no answers for him. "So, the Goddess spared the Red Mistress' life..."

"But not her bottom!" interjected Mr. Sandiman with surprising cheerfulness. His voice echoed from within the dark, cramped chamber. There was a sound of wood scraping against concrete, and Sandiman began to drag what looked like a wooden sculpture of a horse's ass, before its wooden tail snagged against the low-hanging garage door.

"Dagnabbit!" Stamping his feet, Sandiman shoved the wooden horse back into the dark tunnel and began to busy himself with the 50-year-old garage door again.

Wilkes nodded. "...And that's why you punish the temple wenches with flogging...so that their bottoms forever remain a shade of red, like the Red Mistress?"

Bridget sighed, slapping her forehead with the palm of one hand and the wench's backside with the palm of her other hand. "It's not about punishment. It's about kindness! Can't you see that without our temple, this silly spanking wench would not be getting the spankings she so clearly needs?"

"But...why does she need so much spanking? What did she do wrong?"

Bridget continued to slap the temple wench's upturned rear end as she explained the finer points

of the halfling faith to the slow-witted blogger. "Wrong? This wench does plenty of things wrong. She's not a very good spanking wench if you ask me. Always fussing and putting on airs. But even if she were a perfectly behaved spanking wench, she'd still need spankings just the same. If the Goddess didn't want her to be spanked, why did she create her to be a spanking wench? Really, I don't see why you're so fixated on the spanking wench herself. The heart of our theology is in the nature of the Goddess, in her love of laughter, and in sharpening our minds in her service! If you look at my next slide—"

Bridget froze as her phone alarm buzzed again. "Oh, knickknacks! We spent all our time discussing spanking wenches, and service is about to start. I'll have to ask you to go stand in the corner. I'd offer you a seat, but it's considered rude to sit in the presence of the Goddess. Does that make sense? Would you like me to use shorter words?"

Not sure if he was the butt of some strange joke, Wilkes politely declined the Priestess' offer and made his way to the corner. As he tried to straighten up and was forced to hunch, he felt oddly like he'd been sent to time-out by an impatient preschool teacher. Bridget busied herself by pulling the dark elf's silvery hair into two absurd, childish pigtails, complete with pink ribbons and bows. Looking miserable, the wench scrunched her lips into the shape of an "M."

The first few congregants began to arrive as the Priestess made final preparations. Wilkes spotted a halfling family of a father, mother, and a bright-eyed little girl with spectacles. They were followed by a stern elderly halfling woman wearing a shawl, nearly as stout as a dwarf. A handsome young halfling man arrived next, scribbling furiously in a journal. Not paying attention, he trod on the elderly woman's shawl, and when she glared at him he bowed low, offering a thousand pardons, until she shushed him.

Over the next few minutes, a few small groups of halflings milled into the garage/temple. Wilkes thought some of them looked like typical halfling business folk (halflings were famously over-represented in middle-management positions in the corporate world). Others seemed roughly dressed, as though they'd been on the dusty road recently.

Bridget kept looking at her phone, and Wilkes wondered if she was waiting for more congregants to arrive before beginning service. Finally, Bridget gave up and put her phone away, then raised her priestly staff high. "Fellow Good Folk, we gather together to honor the Lady of Love, the Lady of Laughter, the Lady of Lashes. We will soon honor her with our words. Let us first honor her with our silence."

As if on cue, the hastily repaired overhead door behind the idol clanked open with an obnoxious roar, and Sandiman the handyman dragged out

what Wilkes could only assume was the spanking bench.

Sure enough, the bench was roughly shaped like a wooden horse, but the legs were solid and carved geometrically. The seat of the bench was curved like a horse's back, with a saddle-shaped cushion. But the exposed wood looked weathered and splintered, and attached to one end of the bench was a garish, cartoonish wooden horse head, complete with an absurd painted face. Sandiman scraped it across the concrete floor towards the cobblestone mosaic. Beaming with delight, Bridget patted the temple wench's bottom almost playfully to chase her off the mosaic, and the horse was dragged into place before the goddess.

"Yay! I love watching the spanking wench ride the horsey!" squealed the little halfling girl from the audience.

The wench turned on the Priestess, imploring. "No, Lady Mother! Not the spanking horse!"

As the Priestess tut-tutted and the wench fussed, Wilkes heard a female voice whisper softly in his ear. “What an actress. She’s really hamming it up, isn’t she?”

Wilkes barely stopped himself from squealing. Somehow, a woman had snuck up on him in the corner, where the blinding light from the fluorescent bulb didn’t quite reach. Then it occurred to Wilkes that the woman was shorter than him, which was strange because she was looking down on him, but she wasn’t nearly short enough to be a halfling. Then he remembered that he was hunching over to avoid hitting his head, then straightened up to talk to the woman, but forgot he had been hunching over to avoid hitting his head, and cracked his skull on the beam of the ceiling. The elderly halfling woman in the shawl gave him a death stare before turning her attention back on the whiny spanking wench being led to her doom.

Hissing, Wilkes rubbed the crown of his skull and felt a rising goose egg. “Who are you? What are you talking about?”

The woman shook her head, her face hidden in shadow beneath her hood. She was just short enough that she could walk around the cramped room without cracking her head. “I’m a guest, like you. The priestess was kind enough to invite me to witness one of these flogging ceremonies. I read your blog. It was most...entertaining.”

Wilkes puffed up his chest, but before he could turn the conversation to his blog, which was his favorite subject, the cloaked woman spoke over him. “As for your second question, what I’m talking about is that spanking wench’s performance. Do you think the halflings buy it, or are they all in on the joke?”

Wilkes turned his attention back to the wench, who was now gingerly setting herself onto the spanking horse, as though she was trying to avoid touching it.

"Please, don't make me! I'll get splinters!" whimpered the wench.

"What joke? She's clearly terrified, the poor thing."

Before Wilkes could argue his point further, a light blared on his face, burning his retinas. As he stammered apologies for interrupting the service, he heard Lady Mother Bridget's booming voice projecting from the other side of the room. "Good Folk, today we welcome among us an outsider. As you can all plainly see, he is a most distinguished scholar who has taken an academic interest in our Lady. I humbly suggest we allow him to make the first offering to the Lady of Lashes, as our Guest of Honor. Isn't our wench a lucky gal?"

There was a tittering of laughter from the congregation, and Wilkes felt himself inexplicably drawn forward from his corner, somehow feeling embarrassed and flattered all at once. "Oh, I really couldn't! I don't know what to say!"

Wilkes was about to discuss several amusing anecdotes related to his career as a blogger before he noticed Bridget offering him the bundle of birches from the sculpture, gesturing helpfully at the dark elf's upturned bottom. "Roast her well!"

Wilkes blanched as he accepted the bundle, already feeling sorry for the wench. As he glanced down at the nameless dark elf, he noticed Sandiman binding her wrists in place against the two front legs of the horse with two leather thongs connected to the horse's feet. "Um, why are you tying her up so tightly?"

Sandiman didn't bother to look up from his work. "To keep her from bucking off, of course!"

As if in answer, the wench squealed, pulling up and away before the restraints caught her wrists. Wilkes noticed two splinters of exposed wood had pricked her, one near her tummy, another against her breasts, which rested against the horse's neck. Sandiman planted a playful swat on the wench's

bottom. “None of that caterwauling in my ear, missy!”

The saddle cushion somewhat protected the wench’s groin and bottom, though it also angled her bottom upward at an absurd angle, her legs dangling uselessly at either side of the horse.

Wilkes noticed two leather loops on the back legs, identical to the front two. He felt sorry for the dark elf, who was craning her neck to look up at him pitifully, but he also couldn’t help but be fascinated. Finally, he was getting to the authentic roots of a provincial religious cult! “Do you want some help tying down her legs?”

All the halflings in the congregation chortled at this. Wilkes looked back and forth from the puppy-eyed dark elf to Lady Mother Bridget. He caught a glimpse of the cloaked woman in the corner, casually leaning against the wall and tilting her head in his direction. *Go on, genius. Use your head!* she seemed to be telling him wordlessly.

Wilkes blushed, realizing he was the center of attention. Turning awkwardly to the Lady Mother, he said the first thing that came to mind, trying to sound smart and witty. “Um, I suppose the Goddess doesn’t want the wench’s legs tied down?”

The halflings all chuckled politely before Lady Mother Bridget raised her hands for silence, a twinkle in her eye. “Oh, I don’t suppose the Goddess minds one way or the other if you tie down her legs. But we generally prefer to keep the wench’s legs free.”

Wilkes was lost, so lost that he was finally ready to admit to himself how lost he was. “...But...why?”

“Because it’s funnier when she kicks!”

Wilkes blinked. “Ah...I understand.” (He didn’t.)

Wilkes raised the birch bundle awkwardly above the ample bottom that represented his target. “Is there something I should say to her?”

Bridget folded her hands sagely, resting on her staff and nodding towards the idol. “Oh, there are a few old saws, but you needn’t worry. The Goddess is most pleased when you speak your mind frankly! Try saying whatever pops into your darling wee head! If that doesn’t work, try speaking anyway, and let your heart do the talking for you.”

Wilkes grimaced. He had been referring to the dark elf, not the goddess. Part of him felt like he should apologize to her for what he was about to do. He knew the dark elf had consented to enter this life of slavery, but when he looked at her trembling hindquarters, something about the whole situation felt wrong. Behind him, he heard a couple of halflings in the audience cough awkwardly, and the sound of a cricket chirping.

The nameless temple wench carefully turned her head to catch his eye so that only he noticed. She desperately mouthed the words: “Just do it!”

Wilkes obeyed, bringing the birch bundle down squarely across both her cheeks. With a sharp intake of breath, the wench flinched slightly, turning her face away. Wilkes raised the bundle and this time only hesitated for half a second before his heart told him to go for it. He delivered nine more crisp strokes with the birches. One of his lashes was badly aimed and glanced off the wench's left butt cheek with a scratching sound. Another landed lower than he intended, across her upper thighs. But he was gradually getting the feel for how to aim properly and discovered how to roll his arm, enjoying the rich, dense *thwack!* that greeted his better strokes.

Although the wench remained silent, she wriggled in place and grunted. Wilkes was equally impressed by the wench's resolve and pleased with the knowledge that he was starting to have more of an effect.

The wench might be putting on a bold front, but he could tell by the rising red welts that he was definitely hurting her.

The sadism of this thought gave him pause before he remembered how high and mighty this same dark elf had acted when she met him at the train station. He put the full force of his arm into the tenth and final spank, and to his delight the wench kicked her legs and bucked, unable to stop herself from hooting, then hissing as she felt two exposed splinters dig into her thighs on either side of the horse's flanks. "*Ooo-hoo-hoo! 'Tch! Aaaah, ha!*"

Wilkes heard what sounded like the childish titter of a halfling girl behind him before remembering he was supposed to say something. But all he felt was terrible. What was he supposed to say after a spanking? "Um...there, there. Spanking's over. Everything will be all right?"

The garage filled with howling laughter. Wilkes spun around and found the entire audience of

halflings slapping their knees and clutching their stomachs as they laughed their deep, fruity laughs. *Have they all gone mad?* thought Wilkes.

"Ha ha! Perfect timing on the delivery!" gasped Sandiman.

"Hoo, hoo! So many layers of irony!" wheezed Lady Mother Bridget.

"Tee hee! Like she's a little baby!" giggled the little girl.

"Hmm, I should add one like that to my material," hummed the handsome young halfling man, scratching his pen furiously into his notebook.

The stocky-looking older woman sniffed before her tight lips cracked into a slight smile. "Humph. Not too bad, I suppose...for a first attempt."

Seeing that their guest of honor was completely lost, Bridget held her hands high to silence the crowd. "Excellent opener, my fellow. You're not a

halfling, so you can't make an appeal to the goddess, unfortunately, but I know she is well pleased with your efforts, however humble...Good folk, let's hear it for our guest!"

The room erupted in applause. Instead of clapping her hands, Bridget furiously clapped the wench's butt cheeks to join in the fun. "And now, for something completely different, I think our guest has earned a little token of gratitude for such a finely delivered jest! Mr. Wilkes...didn't you want to interview our spanking wench?"

Wilkes nodded, but Bridget didn't give him a chance to interrupt her sermonizing. "And didn't you have an opportunity to interview this wench when she was sent to welcome you to our fair 'burg?"

"Well, not exactly. I didn't know she was a spanking wench. I assumed—"

Bridget slammed her staff to the ground, her face grave. “Yes, but that’s not entirely your fault. I’m afraid our errant little temple wench...misrepresented herself. Isn’t that true, you naughty thing?”

The audience gasped. The halfling girl looked at her parents quizzically. “The spanking girl told a lie? Why would she do that? She gets spanked for fibbing!”

Her mother held a finger to her lips to shush her. “Because she’s a silly little elf who doesn’t know better.”

The wench tapped her feet against the floor, her toes curling and uncurling. “No! I didn’t lie! I only—”

Lady Mother Bridget snapped her holy staff across the wench’s backside. For the first time, Wilkes heard the wench really roar with all her might.

"*Argh!* Okay, okay, I didn't tell the whole truth! I lied by omission!"

If the wench hoped that confessing her sin would spare her bottom from further torment, she was immediately disabused of that notion as Bridget cracked her staff across the wench's bottom for the second time. "Indeed! Now, good folk, you are surely wondering: how could he not recognize a spanking wench at a glance?"

Intrigued, the audience nodded, glancing at Wilkes. Even big people weren't quite that stupid!

Knowing that she had their interest, Bridget gestured to the handyman. "Mr. Sandiman, the evidence, if you please!"

"Oh! Righto! She was wearing this sneaky disguise!" Sandiman pulled the dark elf's leather motorcycle outfit from his satchel and held the damning evidence up to the stunned congregation.

Bridget tapped her staff lightly across the wench's bottom so that her puppy fat only jiggled slightly. "Wench! Where did you steal this absurd outfit?"

The wench writhed on top of her horse, looking imploringly over either of her shoulders. "I didn't steal it! I found it—"

The third *whack* from Bridget's staff encouraged the wench to rethink her alibi. "*Yow!* I found it...in the pile of clothes for the donation drive!"

Another *snap* of the staff left a fresh reddish mark, which rose to join the previous three glistening welts. The wench tried to jump up off the horse, but her restrained wrists held her upper torso in place. Her legs swung up wildly, the way a falling cat twists its legs in mid-air. The wench's mewls were equally cat-like. "*Myeee–ow! Rawrrrl!!*"

As the wench flopped right back down on her spanking horse like an expert, though completely unwilling, rodeo girl, there were fresh giggles at the

amusing sight. "*Yee-ouwwl!* Yes, yes, I stole it! I confess my sin! Please don't punish me! *Baw!! Boo hoo!*"

At the mention of punishment, Bridget grinned like a minx before landing a fifth lash with her staff. "Punish you? Oh no, of course not! The Goddess is nothing if not forgiving and merciful! Lying may be a grievous sin in the eyes of many of the gods. Perhaps even a sin worthy of eternal damnation for your immortal soul. But lucky for you, the Goddess isn't interested in your immortal soul. Just your dumpy ass. Brothers and sisters, it is our duty to guide this foolish creature until she is safely resting across the loving lap of the Lady! Praise be for her wisdom!"

The entire congregation answered together: "Praise be for her mercy!"

Feeling sorry for the wench, Wilkes tried to catch her eye before he noticed something. Her cries sounded convincing, but her eyes were completely

dry. Then he remembered what the woman in the cloak and cowl had said about the wench being quite an actress. *She's nowhere near breaking down?* thought Wilkes, feeling strangely disappointed.

Bridget turned from her flock to address Wilkes. "Now, as for our guest, since you were so eager to interview our spanking wench only for her to play her little trick on you, making herself out to be someone special, I think it only just that we give you the opportunity to question this temple wench. Go on, ask her anything. And if she gets tongue-tied..." Bridget landed a sixth and final stroke of the staff, aiming it diagonally with such precision that it left a neat tally mark across the previous five welts. "...feel free to give her a good spank to help loosen her tongue!"

Taken by surprise, the wench let out a long, moaning "*Ooooh!*" and rubbed her feet together. Then, as she felt the sixth welt rise across her other welts, she tried to run away, the balls of her bare feet

slipping and squeaking against the smooth stones below her. "*Ooo, hoo-hoo-hoo!*"

Despite his reservations, Wilkes cracked up at the sight, then looked for his drone. "Really? Thank you, Lady Mother Füdlewhopper! Um, what should I do with the birches? I need both my hands free in case this old camera starts acting up."

Bridget held out a hand and accepted the birches. "I'm happy to hold them for you. Would you like to try another implement?"

Wilkes swallowed, wondering just how many different implements there could possibly be. "Implements? My, my, I'd love to see them..."

As he stared down at the wench's already blistered bottom, he had a strange impulse to stroke the rising welts. "...but would it be acceptable for me to use my hand?"

Another round of chuckles rippled through the audience. Lady Mother Bridget wiped a tear from

her eye. “Oh my! So simple, and yet so sweet! So elementary, and yet so elegant! Of course you may, and may those great, clumsy hands of yours serve as a gentle, guiding hand to our prodigal wench, leading her back to the Lap of the Lady! While you’re at it, feel free to give her a little massage to warm her up. Or a good pinch if she’s cheeky. I find it helps her pay attention.”

Half listening, Wilkes adjusted his drone to capture a perfect shot of the wench so that her entire body appeared in frame and moved to the other side of her. He did a double take at the mention of the massage and stroked the wench’s bottom delicately, letting his palm lightly brush against her raised welts. He sensed her shiver at the touch. “Very well, in that case…”

Wilkes landed the first spank across the wench’s left butt cheek. The resounding *clap* was strangely musical to his ear, and the ripple of the impact

almost hypnotic. The wench groaned but kept silent.

Then Wilkes remembered he was supposed to be conducting an interview. "So! Um...why did you decide to become a spanking wench?"

The wench hissed, then went stubbornly silent. Feeling annoyed, Wilkes clapped the wench's right butt cheek soundly. "Well? You must have had a reason."

With a little "*Yip!*" of discomfort, the wench hopped in place as she felt the second smack, then wriggled slowly to pull herself away from the splinters that pricked her armpits and lower thighs on either side. "*Ooo-wee!* Okay, okay! I guess...I was bored?"

Wilkes blinked. "You got bored of being free? So, do you find this...work you do...more interesting?"

The wench clenched and unclenched her glutes, giving the illusion that her perky bottom was

smiling, then frowning in concentration as she mulled over the question. “Sometimes.”

“What was the process like to become a spanking wench? Did you have to take a test?”

The little girl in the audience snickered at this, but no one else joined in.

The wench sighed, then flashed a boastful stare at Wilkes as though daring him to challenge her. “After I asked to become a temple wench, I was spanked, paddled, and flogged in myriad creative ways to warn me precisely what I was in for before I made any commitments. Then I survived a grueling test of skill and endurance, competing against dozens of elves who all desired to enter into voluntary slavery to the halfling temple.”

Wilkes scratched his head. “What kind of tests? Do you mean some sort of…gladiatorial combat?”

There were a few scattered laughs. The halfling girl looked at her mother quizzically. “Mommy, are they talking about the reality TV show?”

“Yes, dear. The spanking wench meant to say she was on *Who Wants to Be a Spanking Wench?* It was a few seasons ago!”

The halfling girl narrowed her eyes at the spanking wench’s upturned bottom as though expecting her to get a spanking for telling lies. “But…there’s no gladiatorial combat on that show. They just spank all the silly elf girls who want to be spanking wenches and have them recite from the children’s catechism. Well, that and the elf girls all say really mean and funny things about each other! Why is she trying to make it sound like it’s some sort of sport?”

The girl’s mother shrugged while trying to shush her daughter. “I suppose the wench is playing make-believe. She likes pretending to be something she’s not.”

The halfling girl flashed a toothy grin. “Oh! So she’s not telling lies, just telling stories, right? So is it all right for me to twist the truth a bit, like the spanking wench does?”

The mother beamed, patting her daughter on the head. “Only if you want a spanking, sweetie. Just like the spanking wench gets. Now, shush.”

The halflings all giggled as they overheard this exchange, with the exception of the stern older woman. Famously, halfling parents were widely known not to favor using corporal punishment on children (with rare exceptions), to the point where a halfling parent threatening to spank their child was commonly viewed as an absurdity. Even the little girl joined the laughter, then silently nodded in obedience.

The nameless wench fumed silently as she overheard the crowd poking holes in her story, her face blushing red to match her backside.

Wilkes' mind was reeling. In his futile attempts to find information about the halfling religion online, he'd read something about a televised program but hadn't been able to find recordings of it anywhere. (In the modern, magical world, there were millions of hours of banal televised programs churned out every year, to the point that finding one show amidst the endless ocean of content was practically impossible.) "So, this...reality show? Lots of dark elves compete?"

The wench seemed to ignore the question before Wilkes remembered to pat her bottom a few times half-heartedly. "Huh? Yeah! Mostly dark elves, but even some light elves and wood elves want to enter the service. And, as I said, I beat out all the competition."

The old halfling woman spat with enough force to knock over a spittoon resting on the opposite side of the room. "For one season, anyway."

Again the halflings snickered, and Wilkes understood they were all in on a private joke and he was the odd man out. “So, does being a spanking—uh, a temple wench—provide meaning to your life? Is it rewarding?”

The wench glared at Wilkes, then turned her face away. “As much as anybody’s life has meaning, I suppose. And the job’s as rewarding as any other I’ve ever had.”

The stern old halfling woman scoffed as if answering Wilkes’ question herself. “Bah!”

Conscious of the heckler, Wilkes glanced at the congregation, then noticed Bridget pantomiming the act of delivering a spank as if playing charades. With a nod, Wilkes quickly planted a spank across the center of the wench’s bottom, feeling his palm sink into the flabby folds across either side of her butt crack. When the wench didn’t so much as twitch, he wanted to kick himself for holding back. “Er, does it pay well?”

"Why, you want to steal my job?" answered the wench sarcastically without missing a beat.

The crowd tittered at the wench's one-liner. It struck Wilkes that thus far the audience was reacting to his questions like he was at an open-mic comedy night, not a somber religious ceremony. "Uh, no, don't think I'm qualified. What I mean is this—" Wilkes remembered to deliver a spank and was pleased to see the wench stiffen before wagging her buttocks up and down in a delayed response to the pain.

Wilkes smiled, enjoying the view. "Do you really want to be a spanking wench forever? Are there any, well, promotions for spanking wenches?"

The wench sniffed, but not to hide any tears. It was with derision. "Of course I'm here for life. That was a condition of my voluntary enslavement. There's no hierarchy for spanking wenches."

"So there's no special honors or titles attached to being a spanking wench at, say, the Temple of the High Priestess? Do they—well, if you don't mind my asking—do they get paid more at the bigger temples?" Wilkes heard the older members of the audience titter at this. Out of the corner of his eye he noticed Bridget cross her arms without laughing and wondered if he'd just brought up a sore spot.

The spanking wench seemed to relax, sinking onto her bench. "The halflings don't pay us spanking wenches at all, given that we're slaves and all! Though some spanking wenches are 'honored' with a title, like 'Miss Piggy,' or 'Lady Waterworks,' or 'Madame Can-Can.' Those three work at the High Priestess' Temple..."

The wench glanced over her shoulder, looking for Mr. Sandiman the handyman. When she spotted him, she lifted her bottom and waggled it in his direction as though daring him to comment. "They even have their own Temple Guards!"

Instinctively, Wilkes spanked the wench three times in quick succession, using his shoulder to put more rolling force into each—left, then right, then center. The wench hummed, then squeaked, then yelped as she felt each reverberating *swat*. Wilkes paused, then said the first thing that popped into his head. "That's for showing so much cheek."

At this the audience chuckled politely, and even the wench flashed him a smile. "Aw! Have I been acting rude? Are you gonna punish me?"

Wilkes answered by aiming a spank to the spot where the wench's lower right butt-cheek connected to her upper thigh. He enjoyed the sensation as he felt the flabby fold of flesh lift at the impact and bounce back into place.

And as his hand gently caressed the dark elf's warm, buzzing bottom, it occurred to Wilkes that the voluntary slave must have some sort of masochistic streak. Why else would she want to be a spanking wench? Finally, Wilkes let go of all the reservations

and guilt he felt before. If she was allowed to enjoy herself, why shouldn't he? "No. It's not my job to punish you..."

Wilkes landed a similar stroke to her lower left butt-cheek, discovering a wonderful new rhythm. "It's my job to interview you!"

When he landed the third spank across the center of the wench's bottom, Wilkes let his hand rest. As he felt the elf's tender, scorched flesh, he also felt like he finally understood something: he was making an impression. It was as if there was an electric sensation building in the air to greet each tingling thunderclap. He sensed how the lippy wench was now paying full attention to his every word. These halflings had the right idea: spanking this uppity dark elf really worked wonders on her attitude. "Now, getting back to the matter of pay. Since you receive no financial compensation for your service as a spanking wench, I suppose you expect to receive some sort of spiritual, eternal reward from

the Goddess. What do you think heaven will be like?"

The wench's bottom trembled beneath his palm. "I...If I remain faithful until the end, I will be welcomed into the heavenly court of the Goddess. Then the Lady of Love, the Lady of Laughter, and the Lady of Lashes will invite me to rest upon her lap."

Wilkes remembered everything he'd read about other provincial religions and thought he'd heard that sort of thing before. "Aha! She'll sit you on her lap and embrace you, like a loving mother comforting her child. No more tears, no more pain, the end of your long-suffering journey, that sort of thing."

The wench rubbed her feet together, the nylon ropes dangling loosely to match the subtle gesture. "No, I won't be sitting on her lap. I won't be sitting at all, actually. I'll be bent across her lap...for a spanking, before the whole heavenly host."

"Oh? One last spanking? As a sort of symbolic purification from the sins of the flesh before you are forgiven and restored to glory?"

The wench glanced nervously over her shoulder before quickly twisting her head away and hunching her shoulders. "Uh...no, it's not the 'last' spanking. It's only the first spanking. My reward for serving the Lady as a spanking wench in this life is to continue serving her as a spanking wench in the next life, forever and ever."

There was a dead silence. Wilkes heard a cricket chirping in the garage. "...But...then...why would anyone ever want to be a spanking wench?"

The little girl in the audience cracked up, then started kicking her feet as her laughter built to a crescendo. The musical, childlike quality of the laughter was infectious, and soon the whole congregation was laughing uncontrollably.

Still lost, Wilkes noticed he was still groping the wench and pulled his hand away from her ass with a start. Then he checked his recording drone, remembered he had been recording himself the whole time, and desperately tried to rephrase his question. He hoped if he sounded professional enough now, the footage would seem less embarrassing later. “Ahem! What I mean to say is—well—how is that any different from hell? To be flogged endlessly for all eternity?”

As the laughter died down, Lady Mother Bridget patted Wilkes’ hand affectionately as if he was the cutest, slow-witted child she’d ever met who was also twice her size. “Oh no, no, dearie, you misunderstand. You’ve not to worry! That’s exactly what every temple wench wants for her eternal reward. Of course, none of us know precisely what it will be like in the heavenly chambers. Perhaps our Lady will spend every waking moment incessantly spanking this poor, silly wench, or perhaps she will

allow the saints to chastise her elven wenches on her behalf as merited by our good works!"

The old halfling woman barked, "Course, it's not as if our backwater temple wench's fat ass is all that important in the grand scheme of things."

Bridget's face turned red at the mention of the phrase "backwater temple." "True, Sister Kolhändler, yet we can all take comfort in the knowledge that our Lady loves us all, no matter our circumstances or station in life. She even loves her temple wenches...for their spankable little elven bottoms, at least. Well, Master Wilkes, I trust this interview has been most illuminating? Have you any further questions for our asinine wench?"

At the moment, Wilkes only felt like hiding under a rock. "Thank you! I think I've taken up quite enough of you good folk's time. Please, don't mind me; continue your ceremony. I'll just...observe, that is, if my presence is no trouble, of course! Feel free to tell me if I'm—"

Before Wilkes could shuffle back to his spot in the corner, the spanking wench cleared her throat loud enough to be heard over all the hubbub. “Ahem!”

Slowly, deliberately, teasingly, the spanking wench raised her bottom high into the air as if asking Wilkes to give it a kiss goodbye. “...Aren’t you forgetting something?”

Remembering he was still recording himself and wondering what his readers would think of this footage, Wilkes felt his throat go dry. Then he raised his trembling right hand and brought it down firmly across the wench’s right butt cheek, aiming the slap at a sharper, almost parallel angle across the target. For good measure he used his left hand to plant another spank with slightly more resolve across the wench’s left butt cheek. Finally, feeling all his annoyance at the wench, at the halflings, and at himself for making a fool of himself, he decided to take his frustration out on the wench’s bottom since nothing else was at hand. Grabbing her nylon

rope undergarments in one hand, he twisted them in one fist and lifted slightly to pull them into a tight wedgie. The wench cooed as she felt her ass raised higher into the air, then squealed as she felt six fierce *swats* in quick succession, alternating in sets of three across both of her cheeks in turn. This was followed by another six crisp *slaps* across her thighs, again in sets of three. Using every ounce of his strength, Wilkes landed a final blow directly across the center of the wench's bottom and was pleased to see his hand make a rippling impact through the fat meat of her ass before leaving a vivid imprint in the shape of his hand. The laughter of the halfling congregation was music to his ears, along with the willful wench's warbling wail of pain, as he shuffled back to the corner.

"Hmph. That's more like it. Nice to see he's found a use for those freakishly big hands of his," muttered the elderly merchant lady, who Wilkes now recognized as Sister Kolhändler.

Lady Mother Bridget raised her hands to silence her flock. “Thank you, honored guest. You are unquestionably a not-so-gentle gentleman and a spanking-good scholar. Now, who here wishes to petition our Lady for a boon? Remember, the wench’s bottom is here as an offering for us all.”

The wench groaned as if she wasn’t too sure she wanted her bottom to be serving such a noble, sanctified function anymore.

Happily ignoring the wench’s discomfort, Bridget playfully patted the dark elf’s bottom. “Now, let us pray!”

End of Chapter II

Chapter III

Full Video: A Traditional Halfling Roasting Ceremony!

By John Wilkes

The laughter rang in Wilkes' ears as he stooped back to his corner. Before he had time to either sulk or congratulate himself, something pinched his arm and he started. He'd completely forgotten about the cloaked woman, hidden in the shadows. She clutched her hood tight around her face with one hand, but he could just make out her eyes. They sparkled with a sort of teasing mischief. "Not bad, Mister Blogger, considering it was your first time delivering a spanking."

Wilkes' ears burned. "I'd say I did famously, all things considered."

The woman's eyes crinkled, revealing her hidden smile. "Meaning it was your first time."

Wilkes dug his fingers into the fabric of his sleeves. It was much easier to handle a sarcastic woman's teasing when he could answer her with a sharp slap across her behind whenever he wanted. "Well, what of it? I'd say I put that wench in her place."

The secretive woman relaxed her grip on her hood slightly, then gestured toward the mosaic altar. "Did you now?"

Wilkes turned his head and noticed the wench was now making faces at the congregation, behind Lady Mother Bridget's back. When the audience didn't stop giggling, Bridget scowled and looked over her shoulder, only to find the wench lying obediently in place. The moment Bridget turned back to continue leading her congregation in a prayer to their Goddess, the wench immediately began pulling faces again, each more absurd than the last.

"Enough of that!" growled Mr. Sandiman, stomping forward from his place in the congregation. He brushed past a shocked Priestess and gave the wench a single, reverberating *spank*, aiming his hand at an upward angle with such force that it lifted her hips a few inches up and off the saddle of the bench. The wench squealed, then bounced roughly back into place.

Priestess Bridget looked flattered, as though the handyman had just done her a chivalrous, knightly service. "Why, thank you, brother Sandiman! Really, you have a knack for putting the wench in her place. You could be a temple guard."

Looking bashful, Sandiman shuffled back to his place with the other halfling church-goers. "Oh? T'weren't nothing!"

Wilkes felt his ego deflate like a leaky balloon. "That wench is still begging for more? After how hard I hit her?"

The cloaked woman patted the back of his shoulder softly. “There, there, it’s just that spanking wenches are all accustomed to being beaten regularly. Those really were good, firm spanks you gave her. If you had another few hours to give her a proper drubbing, you might even have gotten a few tears.”

Wilkes strained his eyes, trying to get a better look beneath the woman’s hood. “Hold on, you’re not a halfling. But you talk like you’re familiar with spanking wenches. Are you a blogger? You’re trying to scoop me!”

The cloaked woman shook her head. “Shush! You’ll get us both in trouble!”

Noticing that the elderly Sister Kolhändler was fixing him with a stern scowl, Wilkes shut his mouth. Reflexively, the cloaked woman shielded her bottom with both her hands and gulped, momentarily forgetting to look cool and mysterious.

Lady Mother Bridget finished her prayer and gestured to the congregation. “Come now, don’t be shy…Who’s next?”

“Ooo! Me, me, me!” squeaked the little halfling girl, raising her hand and bouncing up and down on her seat.

The girl started to make her way forward before shuffling her feet shyly as she reached the spotlight.

“Aaawww!” cooed a young, buxom halfling woman standing across the aisle.

Finally, the girl’s mother patted the seat of her skirt to encourage her to hurry along, and the girl skipped to the front of the sanctuary. Now that the girl was in the spotlight, Wilkes noticed she was wearing a rich dark-blue dress with a white apron. She tugged at the hem, fidgeting. “I want to ask the Goddess to please help me with—”

The girl’s mother tried to whisper instructions to her daughter, but the whisper was loud enough for

everyone to hear anyway. “No, Kornblume! Spank the wench first!”

The girl, Kornblume, slapped her hand against her mouth, probably a little harder than she meant to, and sent her thick glasses askew.

Hooting, Lady Mother Bridget waved her hand. “Ah, to be young! Not to worry, young lady. This is your first time appealing to the goddess, isn’t it?”

Kornblume nodded furiously, still holding her mouth shut.

“Well, first you should give the wench a few spanks, and speak to the goddess from your heart.”

The girl lowered her hand from her mouth. “And tell her my best jokes?”

Bridget nodded. “You’re welcome to try. She’s probably heard them all before, but if you speak from the heart, I know she will be pleased with you. But don’t tell her your request until I tell you.

Otherwise, it's like spoiling the surprise! Now, would you like something to use on the wench's bottom?"

Kornblume nodded, then fumbled through a pocket sewed to the front of her apron. "I've got something!"

The audience snickered as the girl held aloft a pink jump rope.

Wilkes heard the woman next to him mutter, "My, my...how devious!"

The wench twisted her head from side to side. "What? What is it?"

But Kornblume was standing in the wench's blind spot: right in front of the wooden horse's hindquarters.

Enjoying the attention, the little girl unwound her jump rope and started to skip in place, singing a nursery rhyme. The wench stiffened as she heard

the soft *snapping* sounds as the rope slapped against the concrete floor:

"Red Missy was an elf maid,

She named herself the queen.

She strutted through the forest,

To show she was supreme!"

With a final skip, the girl spun the rope over her head in a well-practiced motion and whipped it across the dark elf's behind with a *crack*. The wench hooted in surprise, but as she heard the laughter of the audience pick up, she grit her teeth. Smiling sweetly, the halfling girl continued her rhyme, punctuating each stanza with another *lash* of the jump rope.

"She boasted to the creatures,

She'd rule both land and sea,

But met a humble halfling,

As brave as brave could be."

Another *snap* of the jump rope, but the wench only hissed.

"He watched her sneer and smirk,

As she pranced about with pride,

He knew her reign was fleeting,

He'd teach her to be snide."

As she felt the third *lash* of the jump rope, the wench stayed perfectly silent.

"Red Missy called her wizards,

Red Missy called her knights,

Red Missy called the dragons,

All rarin' for a fight."

When the girl landed the fourth *lash* of the rope, leaving a horizontal weal in a thin red line, the wench snarled and let out a groan.

“In came the wizards chanting,

In came the knights with swords,

In came the mighty dragons,

To heed their queen’s accords.”

The wench hooted like an owl when she felt the rope whip across her for the fifth time, before planting her feet firmly on the stone floor in a show of defiance. Unfortunately, because the wench’s wrists were still secured in place, this meant she was only able to thrust her buttocks up higher into the air, which somewhat undermined her attempt to look cool.

“But our hero had a plan,

He waited for his chance,

He snuck up close behind her,

With a swift and sprightly dance.”

After the sixth *lash* from the jump rope, the wench's legs stiffened and trembled.

"The Missy got a spanking,

Across the halfling's knee,

The Missy's pride was humbled,

For all her slaves to see."

Whether deliberately or no, the girl aimed the seventh stroke with her jump rope low, across the wench's thighs. In response, the wench only scoffed. Not discouraged, the halfling girl skipped in a circle before switching her grip on the jump rope and spiraling it over her head.

"'Don't spank me!' wailed the Missy,

'Not on the bare!' she cried!

But they both knew she'd earned it,

And so, he tanned her hide!"

The halfling girl aimed the eighth stroke more carefully so that it left a perfect horizontal line across the center of the wench's bottom. This time, the wench managed to disguise her howl as a hum.

"Red Missy lost her kingdom,

Red Missy lost her claim,

So she was made a spanking wench,

A bright red bum, her shame."

The folded tail-end of the rope whipped against the wench's bottom again for the ninth and final time, leaving a diagonal red welt in the shape of a loop on top of all the previous marks. The wench arched her back and howled like a werewolf at the sight of a full moon.

The audience clapped politely and laughed warmly as the girl folded up her rope and adjusted her glasses. "Say, spanking wench? Wanna hear a funny story?"

The wench took a pained breath before snapping back sarcastically. “If you know one, I’d die to hear it!”

The girl scrunched her face, then continued to tell her story, her voice clipped. It was clear she had practiced this until she had it completely memorized. “Once upon a time, I went to talk to my daddy in his study. ‘Daddy,’ I said, ‘Would you ever spank me for something I didn’t do?’”

Her father tried to mouth something silently, urging her to read his lips. “No, no, Kornblume! Don’t use the past tense! It’s funnier when you use the present tense! Tell the story like it’s happening right now!”

Kornblume scratched her head. “But, Daddy, this story didn’t happen at all?”

The congregation snickered, and as his wife elbowed him in the ribs, Kornblume’s father cleared

his throat, struggling to remember his line. “Ouch! Um...what is it, Pumpkin?”

Kornblume pouted, looking stern. “Daddy! Would you ever spank me for something I didn’t do?”

“Of course not, dear!”

The little halfling girl put her hands on her hips, looking skeptical. “Are you sure? Do you promise?”

With a nervous glance at his wife, the girl’s father raised his hand and replied stiffly. “Uh, sure. Daddy promises to never, ever spank you for something you didn’t do.”

Kornblume beamed, then pretended to wipe sweat from her brow like a ham actress. “What a relief! In that case, my teacher sent me home with a note. I didn’t do any of my homework this week!”

The girl’s mother forced a laugh, slapping her knee, but the congregation didn’t join in.

Wilkes cringed as he realized the girl's story was really a badly delivered attempt at a joke.

The cloaked woman next to him shook her head slightly. "Not very original," she whispered.

Wilkes glanced at his drone to check his recording. "Why is she wasting time telling bad jokes? Shouldn't she be offering a prayer, or homily, or something?"

The shady woman sighed. "You still don't get it, do you?"

"Of course I get the joke, I just don't see the point of—"

The woman silenced Wilkes by flicking a single finger of her delicate, gloved hands against his lips.

The silence dragged on painfully, and a cricket chirped. Kornblume looked from the wench's bottom to her parents, wondering why no one was

laughing. “Did I do it wrong, Lady Mother Bridget? Should I try it again?”

Finally, the wench blew a raspberry. “Well, I didn’t expect anything, and you didn’t disappoint!”

Bridget clapped the wench’s bottom almost absent-mindedly before turning her attention to the confused halfling girl. “Well, if at first you don’t succeed, try, try again, but not when it’s a joke that falls flat. You see, dear, the point of the joke is to make fun of the spanking wench in particular, not so much the idea of spanking in general. You were closer to the mark with your creative jump-rope routine. Why not tell another story? Here’s a tip: try giving the wench a good *spank* anytime you need to pause for effect, especially when you get to the punchline.”

Finally, Wilkes put two and two together. The spotlight, the atmosphere, the audience’s reactions. This wasn’t like any traditional religious service he’d ever seen: it was more like a roasting ceremony at an

insult-comedy club. The Lady of Laughter loved humor, and the temple wench was supposed to be the "butt" of the joke.

The girl examined the wench's bottom pensively. "What if I try asking the spanking wench questions, like the big, silly man did?"

Bridget nodded. "That could work! Nothing like improvisational humor. Just remember: your job is to be as mean and nasty as possible to the silly wench! Why not try the birches next? They're so traditional! Would you like a stool to help you reach the wench's bottom?"

Kornblume beamed as she accepted the birches. "Thank you for the birches! But no thank you for the stool. I want to try sitting on the horsey! Mr. Big Man, would you give me a lift?"

The girl grasped the hem of the cloth that covered the wench's backside and, with a casual flick of her wrist, flipped it up over the wench's backside. Now

only a thin nylon cord preserved the wench's modesty.

Several members of the audience nodded approvingly at this suggestion. Wilkes realized that the girl, who wasn't even two feet tall, had no hope of reaching the wench's backside without some help. "Aren't you—ya' know—afraid you'll fall off if she...bucks?"

The girl rolled her eyes and flashed a buck-toothed smile, revealing her orthodontic braces. "She can't buck me off, silly. She's only a wooden horse, after all!"

The halflings all tittered at that.

Still stooping, Wilkes stumbled out of his corner to scoop the halfling girl up and set her in side-saddle position on top of the wench's lower back. The girl casually spun to straddle the dark elf's waist and face her upturned bottom. As the girl raised the birches high above her target, Wilkes noticed that

the dark elf's backside was about twice the width of the halfling girl's entire body.

Grinning mischievously, Kornblume patted the dark elf's upturned bottom with her free hand, clearly eager to deliver the first stroke of the birches. "Miss Spanking-Elf, I need you to be a good girl and hold still while I give you your spankin's. Can you try not to wiggle too much?"

The spanking wench let the moment hang. "Don't worry, brat. You can't spank me hard enough to make me squirm."

Kornblume's only answer was to bring down the birch bundle, landing a vertical, downward stroke across the wench's left butt cheek. The wench bent her knees and kicked her feet once but resisted the urge to lift herself up off the horse.

Kornblume began to practice the correct motion, playfully patting the birches against each of the wench's cheeks, more to warm up her arm than the

wench's bottom. "It's impolite to call people names, Miss Wench. Please call me 'Miss Kornblume.'"

Kornblume landed a diagonal blow across the wench's right butt cheek. The wench flexed and unflexed her toes. "Yes, Miss Kornblume."

Wilkes heard the shadowy woman click her tongue as they watched Kornblume deliver three more lashes with the birch, using all her limited strength. "Tch. Not the best position. She really can't aim for the sit spots from that angle. Still, gotta give her points for originality."

Sticking out her tongue to help her concentrate, Kornblume deftly caught herself as the wench wriggled beneath her like a proper cowgirl and delivered a fourth *spank*. "So fussy! Now, Miss Wench, when you were a little elf girl, did you ever get spanked for being lazy in school?"

The wench trembled as she held her legs firmly in place against the ground, then sighed. “Yes and no. Not what you’d call a spanking. Back then, it was more like a whipping until we bled, or we might be burned with hot irons, or pricked with needles, or made to sit on a bed of nails.”

Kornblume’s eyes went wide at this news. “...Oh? Well, served you right. And did you learn to be a good girl and work hard in school?”

The wench shook her head abruptly. “Not what you’d call ‘good.’ But I learned to be...diligent...determined...dedicated to my studies.”

At her parents’ urging, Kornblume hastily gave the wench another *spank* to get her attention. “And when you were my age, what did you want to be when you growed up?”

The wench finally relaxed her legs. “What I wanted didn’t matter. It was my duty to serve my clan. To

destroy those who opposed us. To become a great leader in the world."

Kornblume grinned. "Well, then why are you here right now? Getting spanked by little ole' me?"

"Oh? Were you spanking me? I thought you were trying to tickle me."

The elderly Sister Kolhändler snorted in answer. Belatedly, Kornblume hunched her shoulders as she finally realized she was being mocked. Then she landed two *spanks* with the birches. "Did that tickle, wench?"

The wench grimaced but didn't give any other hint of discomfort. "Maybe a little."

Kornblume dealt out three more *swats*, each bouncing off the dark elf's behind. "Try again. Answer 'Yes, Miss Kornblume' or 'No, Miss Kornblume.' Did that tickle, wench?"

"Yes, Miss Kornblume."

Kornblume gave the wench six more strokes with the birch bundle. The wench's hips bounced up and down slightly, but not enough to risk sending the halfling girl flying. "Woah! Hold still! ...How about now? Did that feel like a tickle?"

"No, Miss Kornblume."

Pleased with herself, Kornblume crossed her arms. "Does your bottom hurt, elf? Does it smart? Be honest!"

Seemingly defeated, the wench answered respectfully, only to twist her neck and flash a defiant smirk. "Yes, Miss Kornblume...but to be honest, only a little."

As Sister Kolhändler guffawed loudly, Kornblume hung her head, twiddling her fingers. "Oh? I'm sorry, Miss Spanking Wench...I practiced for this by spanking my pillow. But I guess I'm still not strong enough to do it right."

The wench sighed, then turned to look over her shoulder to look the halfling girl in the eyes, her voice genuine, all traces of sass gone. “Look, kid, you’ll have to spank me much harder if you want to honor the Lady properly. And if you were trying to set me up for some kind of scripted wordplay on the word ‘smart,’ you can’t expect me to respond to all your gags perfectly like a knock-knock joke. Frankly, you were doing better with the jump-rope bit. Now, if you want to—”

Bridget interrupted the wench by snapping her staff across her backside. “Enough of that, wench! It’s my job to shepherd the fold, not yours.”

The wench whistled with discomfort, rocking back and forth uncomfortably on the bench before holding her tongue. Satisfied that the wench would think twice before interrupting, Bridget turned her attention to young Kornblume. “Now, if you want to stick with this reverse-cowgirl routine, you’ll need to really make her buck and rear like a bronco.

Grab a hold of the cord of her loincloth so you can—"

Instinctively, Kornblume grasped the nylon cord that connected the wench's fundoshi-like undergarments and twisted it in her fist. "Like this?"

The wench was forced to lift her bottom upwards, her inner legs grazing the splintered wood on either side of the weathered bench.

Bridget beamed. "Yes, Miss Kornblume! Like that!"

Kornblume giggled. "Wow! Thank you, Lady Mother! And thank you, Miss Wench. You've been a big help!"

Feeling a headache coming on, Bridget rubbed the bridge of her nose. "You really don't need to be so polite to the wench, Kornblume, dear. She's only a—"

But before Bridget could explain the halfling church's position on the inferior and subservient nature of elven wenches, Kornblume delivered the next *spank* with renewed enthusiasm.

This time the wench squeaked and hopped in place. Even with her firm grip, Kornblume had to concentrate to keep herself from getting thrown off the wench's back. The audience tittered at the sight as the wench bounced in place. "*Ow!* You're welcome, Miss Kornblume!"

As the wench thanked Kornblume, she stared Lady Mother Bridget right in the eyes. The Priestess gripped her staff and made a mental note. Sooner or later she would have to address the wench's sinful, prideful streak. But for now Bridget decided to let the halfling child have her fun. After all, the halfling Temple needed to welcome all the youngsters they could get if they wanted to survive another generation.

Focused on the dark elven bottom before her, Kornblume barked as if there had been no interruption to her previous lecture and landed another *spank*. "And another thing, wench, you didn't answer my question. If you were such a good student as a little elf girl, why are you still getting spanked like a naughty little elf girl right now?"

Now that Kornblume was not holding back, the wench had to make a conscious effort to hold in place and suppress her shouts. "*Oof!* I was an excellent student! I was special!"

Wilkes felt a puff of air and turned to see the cloaked woman glowering as she witnessed the proceedings. He caught a brief glimpse of her lips as she huffed before clutching her hood even tighter against her face. "Hmph! Typical," whispered the woman.

Oblivious of her audience, Kornblume carried on spanking the wench merrily. "Oh, please! If you were so special back then, you wouldn't be a

spanking wench now. Don't try to tell me as a little girl you always dreamed of growing up to get your butt spanked every day!"

"*Ouch!* No, but—*Yow!*"

Kornblume began spanking at a steadier pace, not bothering to wait until the end of a question to deliver the next blow. The wench's hips rocked back and forth with each stinging stroke, and Kornblume gradually discovered how to keep her place without breaking the rhythm.

"Of course not! Everyone knows that spankings are only for very bad little children, or for silly elves like you. If only you were a good student and did your homework, you could have been something other than a spanking wench. Anything! Just admit that you were lazy, or a complete dunce as a student. Tell the truth!"

The wench finally began to struggle in earnest, her legs kicking freely. "*Oh! Yee-ouch!* It's not a lie! I

worked hard as a student! I was a powerful, independent businesswoman! That's the truth!"

As the laughter in the sanctuary started to build, Kornblume barely avoided being "unsaddled" as her face smacked against the wench's bucking lower back. The halfling girl quickly fixed her glasses, which had gone askew, before renewing her efforts to birch the flailing elf into submission. "That doesn't make sense! I'm working hard at school so I can get a good career in business administration! That's my dream! You're telling me you had all that and you just...gave it up?"

The spanking horse seemed to come alive as the wench flailed violently back and forth atop it, nearly tipping them all over. "*Ow!* Yes, yes...*Oh-ho!* Yes, Miss Kornblume! *Hoo-wee!* I really—*hoo*—I really did have that life, and—*Woah!*...*Ow, ow, ow*...And I gave it all up!"

Bouncing up and down along with the bucking dark elf, Kornblume timed her next *spanks*

perfectly, letting the birches connect at the precise moment the wench thrust her hips upward to meet them. “Then why am I working so hard in school if I could just be happy as a spanking wench?”

As the wench flopped back down onto the splintering bench, she felt two tears forming in her eyes and fought to hold them back. “Because you couldn’t be happy as a spanking wench! ...Because it’s not your dream!”

Kornblume paused the spanking. “Oh...That makes sense.”

Then she brought the last stroke of the birch bundle down smartly. “Say, Miss Wench, one day I want to be a successful businesswoman, but I also want to be a mommy one day too. Do you think you’ll still be a spanking wench right here at this temple when I’m all grown up?”

The wench pressed her cheeks against the neck of the wooden horse, ignoring the splinters in a

desperate bid to wipe away the two tears. Of course she hadn't expected any grand honors or titles when she first applied to be a spanking wench. But she had always believed that she would of course be accepted to service at the High Priestess' temple. "...Yes, Miss Kornblume...probably..."

Kornblume tucked the birch bundle under her armpit and patted the dark elf's bottom playfully. "In that case, Miss Wench, no matter how high I climb the corporate ladder, I promise to come back from time to time to visit you in this temple! Maybe one day my children will be able to spank you! Or even my grandchildren! Wouldn't that be funny? Will you promise to be here?"

The wench nodded and whimpered as she felt the love-taps. On the one hand, nothing sounded more wonderful than getting to watch this child grow up, marry, and raise her own children. For a dark elf, watching generation after generation of the lesser races come and go was like watching the passing of

the seasons in the elder days, before the industrial revolution eliminated most of the natural world. In the wench's eyes, the halflings' brief lives had a romantic, almost poetic quality.

On the other hand, the wench felt the humiliation of knowing that after all that time she would still likely be trapped in this backwater temple. If the last aging halfling church members finally died out, the wench was more likely to be shipped off to another dying temple than "promoted" to a position in the High Priestess' temple. And even if she was permitted to serve there, who cared? Even then she would still be nothing but a nameless temple wench.

"I'm sorry, Miss Kornblume. I can't promise anything. We none of us know what the future holds."

Kornblume was not quite sure she understood but nodded anyway and began to climb off the bench, using the wench's undergarments as an anchor

point to hold her weight. “Oh? Well, I’ll pray to the Lady that you’re still here! Thank you for teaching me how to do a better job spanking you, Miss Super Special Boss Lady.”

To the wench’s surprise, Kornblume circled to the front of the bench and gave her a quick peck on the cheek, then winked as she examined her more closely. The wench knew that the two tears must have made her mascara run slightly. The wench felt a warm glow, as if she suddenly knew why she had entered into service for the halfling temple. Finally she was helping the next generation of halflings grow closer to their deity! “Aw? You’re welcome, Miss Kornbl—”

Then Kornblume surprised the wench with a resounding *spank* across her buttocks with the birch bundle. The wench roared, and the congregation erupted with laughter.

Tittering at the sight of the wench’s flailing legs, Kornblume smacked the birches against the palm of

her hand and announced boldly, "And when it's time for my children and grandchildren to spank a naughty, nasty old elf lady's big, fat booty, I want you to be their very first spanking wench!"

Hissing with fury, the wench clenched and unclenched her fists and the toes of her feet. She would have clenched her butt cheeks too, but the absurd bench made that almost impossible by forcing her to spread her legs wide. In an instant her hope to endure the tiny child's spanking without screaming had been shattered. She couldn't even take a licking from a girl less than a third her size. *I hate being a spanking wench,* she thought darkly.

"Hear, hear!" cheered Mr. Sandiman, and even the dour Sister Kolhändler joined the polite applause.

Lady Mother Bridget held up her hands for silence. "Thank you, Sister Kornblume. That was a lovely offering! In you the Lady is well pleased!"

Kornblume narrowed her eyes and cocked her head. "Huh? But I forgot all my best lines from my *Big Book of Spanking Jokes*!"

Touched by the child's innocence, Bridget waved a hand. "I'd say you did better without it. You were very polite to the wench. Perhaps a bit too polite. Remember, a spanking wench isn't quite a person like you, nor your mommy, nor your daddy. Tell me, dear, do you have any dollies at home? Have you ever played house and pretended to spank one of your dolls as if you were the mommy?"

Kornblume nodded. "Yeah, I've got all the Plastique High Glam Girl dolls! They're real brats. I spank 'em all the time!"

"Well, in the future you can pretend that this spanking wench is like one of your toys. Her bottom is always here for you to spank, and spank, and spank anytime you want to talk to the Goddess. Now, what would you ask of the Lady, my child?"

Kornblume smiled so widely she revealed every one of her metal-mouthed teeth. “That’s easy! I want her help on my exams tomorrow!”

Bridget pretended to wave her finger in mock lecturing. “Oh? You have studied for your exams, I assume?”

The girl’s eyes popped open wide at this question and looked to her parents for answers.

“Of course she did, Lady Mother! What, do you think I raised a slacker?” barked Kornblume’s mother.

Quickly, Kornblume nodded and snapped her attention back to the priestess. “Yeah! What she said! I am totally prepared for my exams!” The truth was, Kornblume had spent most of the past few weeks playing office-worker simulator games online and was banking on a little last-minute divine intervention for her classes.

Oblivious to Kornblume's distress, Lady Mother Bridget raised her arms importantly, back in preaching mode. "Very good! For although the Lady promises good fortune to her faithful halflings, we must remember the Proverb: 'The Wise Fellow Maketh His Own Luck'...Or 'Maketh Her Own Luck,' in your case, Miss Kornblume. Thank you, dear. Back to your mummy you go!"

Kornblume nodded and trotted back to her parents, subconsciously holding her hands behind her back as she remembered her mother's threat to spank her till her backside looked like the red-bottomed missy's if she skived on her homework.

Climbing up onto her Mother's lap, she rocked her head back and looked up sweetly. "Mommy, do you think I'll get to spank that silly elf girl in heaven?"

Kornblume's mother cooed, enjoying the murmurs and giggles of approval from the surrounding church-goers, before playfully swatting her

daughter's rump to warn her to sit still. "Only if you are a good little girl, and only if she's a good little spanking wench, dear. But yes, I hope so! Now, shush!"

Kornblume giggled before she felt the light love-tap, then quickly settled into her mother's lap, not wanting her bottom to be a target at the moment, given that she hadn't studied at all for tomorrow's exams. But Kornblume decided not to worry about tomorrow too much. After all, that was future-Kornblume's problem!

Clearing her throat, Lady Mother Bridget began to intone solemnly, "Thank you, Sister Kornblume. Now, who—"

But before the Priestess could repeat her altar call, the stern, stolid Sister Kolhändler stepped forward, tucking her umbrella under her arm before cracking her knuckles. "Me! I'm next! I've been petitioning the Goddess daily all week."

The old woman continued to mutter, loud enough to be heard by everyone, as she marched straight to the front of the sanctuary without so much as a nod of acknowledgement to the Priestess. “Really, I’m the only one giving that temple wench’s arse any sort of proper attention. That’s got to count for something with the Lady, sooner or later!”

At the sound of the faithful dowager’s husky voice, the spanking wench clutched tight to the spanking horse, ignoring even the splinters digging into her arms, legs, and torso from every angle.

Wilkes felt his knees knocking, partially because standing at such an awkward, hunched angle was causing his feet to fall asleep, but also because he sensed the menace in the old halfling merchant lady’s commanding voice.

The cloaked woman next to him raised her eyes and practically purred with delight. “Oooh, this ought to be good!”

Wilkes strained his eyes, his reporter instincts making him more curious. In the dim light he could just make out the young woman's soft smile.

Sister Kolhändler clapped the wench's quivering hindquarters once before examining the cane handle of her umbrella. "Mr. Sandiman! Tie down the wench's legs. I don't want her to kick and snap my umbrella. It's an antique!"

"No! *Puh-leeze!* I won't kick! I can hold still! I'll be good!" cried the wench while kicking her feet and refusing to hold still. As Sandiman caught hold of the wench's ankle, she panicked and climbed up onto the horse in a futile attempt to escape.

"Oi! Get your arse down here, girly!" growled Mr. Sandiman, snatching at her other foot.

The wench was nearly standing on the saddle, her restrained wrists forcing her to stick her bottom high in the air. At one point her toes caught on the trailing loincloth of her fundoshi, causing the fabric

to snap up wildly like a rubber band. The halflings howled with laughter at the sight. "*No-no-noooh!* Not that! Anything but that! The splinters will poke my—"

Finally the saddle cushion slipped loose under the wench's feet, causing her to lose her balance and flop back down in place on the bench. The fall itself wasn't enough to hurt her, but the jagged splinters were more than sufficient for the task.

Without the limited protection provided by the saddle cushion, the wench felt newly exposed slivers of wood dig into her groin and inner thighs. "*Yee-hee-heep!*"

The wench fought ferociously enough to make the wooden horse seem to come alive, bucking and rearing, before Sister Kolhändler slapped her left hand down against the small of the wench's back to hold her in place. A moment later Kolhändler's right hand slapped down with matching force,

smashing into the undercurves of the wench's backside.

"Enough!" Kolhändler bellowed before continuing to spank the wench at a furiously quick pace. The wench caterwauled musically in time to the rhythm. It was as if they had a dramatic cavalry-charge overture for musical accompaniment.

Kolhändler did not pause her gentle, loving, corrective measure for a moment as she gave orders. "Sandiman, get this wench's legs restrained at once!"

Sandiman side-eyed the wench's flailing feet. "Happy to, ma'am, if you'll only hold off spanking the wench for a moment."

"Of course not. She needs some maternal guidance right now."

Gritting his teeth, Sandiman caught the wench's right leg and used his whole weight to wrestle it into place before strapping the first leather thong

around her twisting right ankle. When the wench felt the splinters press into the fleshy calves and gracilis muscle of her right leg, she kicked her left leg all the harder and shielded her left buttock with her free left foot. With a snarl, Kolhändler brushed the wench's foot away and carried on spanking. After each reverberating *clap* she deftly blocked the wench's kicking foot by bringing her spanking hand up to interfere with the wench's kicks before bringing her gnarled hand back down.

Sandiman watched this in awe, expecting the imposing Sister Kolhändler to stand aside and allow him to grapple the wench's left leg into place. "Pardon me, Madam, but can't that wait until—" The wench's flailing foot caught Sandiman across the lips, and he stumbled back, snatching her left ankle between both of his hands.

The wrinkles on Sister Kolhändler's pruneish face seemed to double as she pursed her lips and increased the pace of the spanking even further.

"Quickly, Sandiman, while I have the wench's attention!"

Finally Sandiman fought the wench's left foot down against the bench, his stumbling pleas for pardons drowned out by the sounds of *slaps* and screams. The moment he secured the leather thong in place, he flopped back with a gasp of relief, then crawled backwards, his chest heaving.

Kolhändler scooped up her antique umbrella. "That's better. Should have had her trussed up proper from the start. Young people these days and their notions on spanking!"

Wilkes craned his neck to get a glimpse at the spanking wench's face, sure she must be at her absolute limit after such a furious hiding. But as the laughter started to die down in the garage, Wilkes saw that she was only smiling, her eyes perfectly dry. "She's still trying to steal the show?" he whispered out loud.

The woman in the shadows snorted. "How astute. That's the kind of incisive observation that makes your blog such entertaining reading material."

The irony was lost on Wilkes. "Why, thank you!"

Kolhändler twisted at the end of her umbrella, and with a *pop* the umbrella detached from the solid shaft and cane handle.

The wench's eyes widened as she spotted the cane before she hid her nerves behind a cat-like smile. "What's the matter? Your dainty, delicate palm starting to sting?"

Ignoring the chuckles from the audience, Kolhändler lightly pinched the wench's face to force her jaw open. "Not interested in your color commentary."

With that, the elderly halfling pressed the metal runner of the umbrella attachment into the wench's mouth so that the fabric and ferrule tip of the umbrella faced outwards. Pouting, the wench

bit down on the button as if she had been trained to do this in the past, and with a ruffle of cloth the umbrella opened in front of the wench's face. The absurd sight was enough to crack up one of the halfling parishioners, and soon the rest of the congregation joined in.

Kolhändler finally smiled, all her sternness seeming to melt away at once as she tested the whippiness of her cane handle before turning her attention to Lady Mother Bridget. "You see, Bridget, dear, all you have to do is be authoritative. Don't give an uppity spanking wench so much as an inch!"

To illustrate, Kolhändler delivered a sharp *blow* with her cane across the wench's lower bottom, covering both cheeks. Biting down on the umbrella, the wench seethed and straightened her arms and legs. But with her ankles and wrists bound tight, she could only lift her bottom into the air for a few moments before collapsing her weight back down onto the wooden horse's back.

Pressing the handle of her cane against her lips to affect a pensive look, Kolhändler paced from one side of the bench to the other, heading to the wench's right side, on "stage left." "You know the drill, wench. When I ask you a question, I expect a polite answer. Of course, with that umbrella in your mouth, we'll have to get creative. Be so kind as to bite down on the button if you please."

The wench tried to say "I don't please," but with her mouth full it sounded more like "M'aye th'on'th pweev'the!"

Casually, Kolhändler flicked her wrist backwards to catch the wench by surprise, landing the tip of the cane across the wench's right butt cheek. "No backtalk! Push the button on the umbrella once to say 'Yes' and twice to say 'No.'"

The wench crossed her eyes and pressed her lips against the button, wondering what the evil old woman was planning for her. The moment she bit down, the umbrella collapsed and snapped shut

around her face. Reflexively the wench shook her head and felt the umbrella slipping away from her jaws. Guessing that dropping the umbrella would earn her more strokes of the cane, the wench lunged her head forward and snapped at the umbrella before it could fall to the floor. Her teeth caught the button again, and the umbrella popped open so that she could see again. The wench spluttered with relief before a fresh *stroke* of the cane caught her by surprise.

This time Kolhändler aimed a full stroke across both of the wench's butt cheeks, landing the tip against the left buttock. "No, is it? I expect to hear a 'Yes, Ma'am!' when I give you a direct order. Do you need extra strokes?"

Understanding her predicament, the wench shook her head and bit down twice on the umbrella. It flopped across her face, then back into position. "*Mooooh!*" the wench wailed, her pride, her face, and her ass all stinging as she heard the chuckling

audience behind her. She knew how ridiculous she must look at the moment.

Kolhändler tapped her cane against her shoulder as she marched back to her original spot on the wench's left side. "No extra strokes, you say? In that case, are you going to obey?"

Steeling herself, the wench nodded and pressed the button once to signal "Yes" and let the umbrella slap closed against her face. "*M'yeth!*"

Mercilessly the old lady swung the cane down, this time letting the tip catch the wench's left buttock. "...Yes, ma'am!"

Her comedic timing was perfect. As the older members of the audience realized what a pickle the wench was in, their giggles grew to great guffaws.

The wench concentrated long enough to press the button once and mumble "*M'yep'th, Ma'mb'fht!*"

The stern-faced old lady slammed the cane across both the wench's cheeks. "Enunciate!"

As the howls of laughter subsided, the wench hung her head, fighting for breath, and felt a spittle of drool dripping down the umbrella handle. With an effort she pressed the button, let the umbrella close shut on her face yet again, and pronounced as clearly as she could "*Yeeeetth...Mmm'aaahmmm...*"

Kolhändler hummed before tapping the cane playfully against her victim's rump. "Close enough!"

That earned fresh chuckles from the halfling congregants.

Kolhändler began to march in a circle around the wench, momentarily pausing the caning. "Now, I understand you were a CEO. I'm curious: did you ever have a personal secretary?"

The wench caught a glimpse of the implement of her torture out of the corner of her eye. The cane

handle was short for a human but the perfect size for a halfling to use as a walking stick. The wooden shaft was far thicker than a traditional rattan cane for corporal punishment and would surely leave black-and-blue bruises on the wench's already blue-black behind. The wench pressed the button once to free her face and answered "*Yeeth', ma'am'th!*"

"And did you ever...spank your secretaries when they made mistakes?"

The wench wanted to sigh but couldn't without dropping the umbrella. Over the past few weeks Kolhändler had been visiting the temple daily to flog the wench and appeal to the goddess. During that time Kolhändler had practiced a variety of questions and gags, clearly preparing material. The wench had answered this same question before.

The wench let the umbrella flop shut. "*Yeeth', ma'am'th!*"

The audience cooed with surprise, and Kolhändler raised an eyebrow performatively. "I see? And did you enjoy spanking your secretaries?"

The wench's umbrella popped open. "*Yeeth', ma'am'th!*"

"Of course you did. And while you were a free elf, did you enjoy being spanked?"

The wench hunched her shoulders before pressing the button to close the umbrella again. She hadn't heard this one before. "*Yeeth', ma'am'th!*"

Kolhändler finished circling halfway around the wench, stopping at the wench's right side, and aimed the cane high. "And are you enjoying being caned right now?"

The wench felt the tension in the room and knew she was trapped. If she said yes she would be mocked for being a masochist. If she said no she would be mocked for being reduced to her current

state of degradation. She wasn't even sure if she knew the answer anymore.

Fuming, the wench snapped the umbrella open and turned her head. If she didn't have the umbrella in her mouth she could have attempted a smug sneer just to show how unconcerned she was. The wench could only hope the nasty old lady could see the defiance in her eyes. "*Yeeth', ma'am'th!*"

Instantly the old lady struck the wench's right butt cheek with the cane, then slowly, methodically began to cane the wench at a steady pace, aiming every stroke so that only the right half of the wench's bottom was covered in fresh lines of cane marks. After three strokes the wench began to squirm, accidentally biting down on the button so that the umbrella collapsed, the metal tips digging into her head and face from all sides.

It was maddening! After every stroke she expected one to match on her left cheek, only for her right buttock to take more and more punishment, the

earlier stinginess from the birching and hand-spanking slowly being replaced by a deep, throbbing ache. After twelve strokes her right buttock began to go numb.

Finally Sister Kolhändler paused and rested her walking stick. "Well, you know what they say: 'Find a job you love, you'll never work a day in your life!' And how about now? Still having a grand old time being spanked?"

The wench dug her fingernails into the palms of her hands and pressed the button to open the umbrella. "*Yeeth', ma'am'th!*"

"Goodness! Aren't you a lucky wench? This job must be a dream come true for you. Well, in that case I have a little treat for you..."

Sister Kolhändler gave the wench an additional six strokes, again aiming them at only the wench's right cheek. "How about now? Still enjoying your spanking?"

Based on the prickling sensation in her left butt cheek in contrast to the numbness of her right butt cheek, the wench had the distinct impression her left cheek was feeling left out. The wench felt her nose clogging and knew that tears would soon follow despite her resolve. She knew she was trapped, and the only potential way out was the truth. "*Nuuuh, ma'am'th!*"

Finally the cane cracked across both of the wench's butt cheeks, and the wench's relatively less-punished left buttock felt it like a fresh blow. Sister Kolhändler clicked her tongue. "Tut, tut, it looks like rain. Don't forget your umbrella!"

Feeling two tears budding, the wench bit down twice to close and open the umbrella in quick succession to repeat her answer. "*Nuh-uh, ma'am'th!*"

Sister Kolhändler patted the wench's tender right buttock and rubbed it almost soothingly before moving back to the wench's left side. "Oh, dear, not

having fun anymore? Being a temple wench not as glamorous and exciting a career as you expected it to be?"

Hoping that this meant her right butt cheek was out of the frying pan and only her left butt cheek was headed toward the fire, the wench answered no, remembering to use both the umbrella and her words this time. "*Noooh, ma'am'th!*"

Sister Kolhändler raised the cane high above the wench's left cheek. "Well, you know what they say..."

She swung the cane, but not across the wench's left buttock alone as everyone expected. Instead the cane lanced full across the wench's bottom, leaving a deep, glistening welt. The wench's right butt cheek had already begun to blister from her ordeal.

"Life sucks, and then you die!"

The wench screeched, biting down to stop the umbrella from flying out her mouth only to have

the umbrella snap back shut, which earned a fresh roar of laughter from the audience.

Sister Kolhändler turned over her shoulder to smirk at the Priestess. “See that, Bridget? That’s how it’s done! Whoever said the definition of ‘insanity’ is trying the same thing over and over again expecting different results...never tried spanking a saucy temple wench!” The audience tittered politely, but clearly they enjoyed the slapstick element more than the stand-up comedy aspect of Kolhändler’s routine.

With a sigh, Kolhändler shook her head. Sure, pain was funny when it happened to someone else, but why couldn’t she get an audience that appreciated her more sophisticated humor?

As the wench felt two tear drops spill down her cheeks, she let them drip down into the inside of the umbrella, only hoping she could hide them a bit longer and not be called a crybaby.

She thought about how at that moment she wanted to die. But even in death all she could expect was an eternity of pain and humiliation. There was no escape! Then she felt the umbrella being pulled from her mouth and glanced up.

With a mixed look of both disgust and satisfaction, Sister Kolhändler produced a wet wipe from her pocket and cleaned off the drool, snot, and tears from her umbrella. The wench tensed, waiting for the mockery that would surely come. But Kolhändler only winked, clearly enjoying the fact that only she had noticed the wench's tears so far thanks to the wench's face being hidden from the audience. Finally Kolhändler unlatched the leather thongs that restrained the wench's hands. "Now, I'm going to ask you a few questions that will require a bit more thought than a simple 'Yes, ma'am' or 'No, ma'am.' Not that I expect much resembling a deep thought given your career choices."

Confused, the wench rubbed her sore wrists and began to sit up. The nasty old lady always preferred to flog the wench while she was completely restrained, believing it to be the most traditional method. This couldn't be a good sign.

Sure enough, with a quick motion Sister Kolhändler unsnapped the clasp that held up the thin sash that served as the temple wench's bra. As the wench straightened up she instinctively held the sash to the front of her chest to cover her breasts. She almost dropped it as she felt the welts on her lower sit-spots press against the splintered wood of her horse, now unprotected by the meager saddle-shaped cushion.

Kolhändler nodded curtly. "Very good! Keep that sash in place. We have children in the audience, after all!"

The only child in the audience, Sister Kornblume, giggled impishly. "Tee hee! It's like she forgot to fix her swimsuit at the beach!"

Wilkes saw Sister Kolhändler gesture towards him and the cloaked woman in their dimly lit corner. "I believe some of our guests may not be familiar with *Who Wants to Be a Spanking Wench?* Isn't that right?"

Wilkes nodded furiously and turned to the woman, expecting her to say something. "Yes! You don't suppose it'd be possible for me to get a copy of the old episodes? I'm sure we'd both love to know more about your catechism process. It sounds simply fascinating, doesn't it?"

But the mysterious woman only tightened her grip on her hood.

Sister Kolhändler cleared her throat to get her audience's attention, then pinched the puppy-fat of the wench's left butt cheek to get her victim's attention. "Wench! Do tell our guests: when you were brought forward as a candidate to join the Way of the Lady, what did you so boldly proclaim to the High Priestess?"

The wench felt the fabric sash flutter as her hands trembled, but with suppressed rage, not fear. “That I was destined to be the greatest temple wench since the time of the Red Mistress.”

Kolhändler pursed her lips, and the audience began to snicker again. “Oooh? And how’s that working out for you?”

“...After I completed the first round of trials, they sent me...here.”

“So basically they threw your ass-end out here...to the ass-end of the Shire?”

Several of the older members of the audience snorted at the play on words.

It was hard to tell who looked more consternated at the moment, the wench or Lady Mother Bridget.

Looking confused, Kornblume whispered to her mother, loud enough to be heard by everyone, “What’s an ‘ass-end’?”

Her mother winked affectionately while pretending to slap her own rump. “It’s another word for ‘butt,’ but don’t repeat it unless you want your ‘butt-end’ getting spanked!”

Kornblume beamed. “Ah! Got it! I sure don’t want to end up like that spanking wench!”

Everyone chuckled warmly as they overheard this exchange.

Sister Kolhändler tapped her foot, eyeing the priestess. “Well, Lady Mother Füdlewhopper?”

Lady Mother Bridget sighed and held up her hands. “Our Lady of Love, Laughter, and Lashes is…most pleased…with your offering.” As the Priestess forced herself to utter the words, she looked like she was struggling with the temptation to become an atheist.

Kolhändler sniffed as though she never had any doubt. “In that case I humbly petition the Goddess to protect my wares from thieves, hoodlums, tax

collectors, and all other such rodents and forms of pestilence."

Bridget intoned a prayer of gratitude to the Lady but managed to make it sound more like an imprecatory prayer. "Praise be for her bounty! Praise be for her kindness! Thank you, Sister Kolhändler. Next, please!"

The handsome young halfling man, who Wilkes had noticed tripping on Kolhändler's shawl earlier, leapt forward from the throng. "Verily! I have composed a masterpiece! An ode to my muse which I will offer up to the Lady!"

When he spotted Sister Kolhändler stomping towards him, the young man danced out of her way like a rabbit before a charging boar.

Bridget waved to summon the young man forward. "Sounds hilarious! Let's hear it!"

In his peripheral vision, Wilkes noticed the cloaked woman drumming her fingers against her crossed arms.

End of Chapter III

Chapter IV

Who Is That Mysterious Woman? The Shocking Answer Revealed!

By John Wilkes

The young halfling man raised his rather impressive nose high, sending his curly, jet-black hair flying majestically. His clothing was richly tailored, and he wore a peacock feather in his cap. With a flourish, he produced what looked like an antique scroll of parchment from his coat (though it was actually just a cheap, mass-produced prop), and a riding crop with a leather tip cut into the shape of a heart. Clearing his throat, he began to read. "Good folk, I, Lothario the Lover, hereby dedicate this verse to my muse! For I am in love! In love, I say!"

Lothario whipped his scroll around him like a dancer's ribbon, landing at the side of the bemused spanking wench, who was still holding her flimsy

sash in place to cover her breasts, before he landed a stroke across the wench's backside once with the riding crop. "Now, lend me your ears, for the poetic art of Lothario Lovefoot, the Bard of the halfling Quarter! Let this be the cipher of my heart. For my muse, though I love her...is an ass!" At the mention of the word "ass," he spun in place and struck the wench's ass a second time. The riding crop left a fresh mark in the shape of a little heart where the leather tip landed. The wench hopped in place, the restraints on her legs holding her down, clutching the sash tightly to her bosom as she rasped for air.

"Verily! My muse is a stubborn ass, but what is a stubborn ass but the noble face of courage by another name? And what an ass! Have not the poets taught us that to have courage is to have bottom? And what is a bard if not a man who loves a good tale?"

Lothario emphasized the word "tale" with a third stroke, then gestured his riding crop at his target.

"Now, my muse has a name...forsooth, my muse is before me at this very moment!"

The wench bit back her scream, then performatively twisted in her seat to flash him with mocking, bedroom eyes. "You're cute, honey, but I'm only into taller men."

Lothario's eyes popped open. "What? No, not you!"

Most of the congregation, with the notable exceptions of Lady Mother Bridget and Sister Kolhändler, began to guffaw at the sight of the wench stealing his thunder. Lothario's face burned red. "Now look what you did! You spoiled my punchline. You were supposed to say, 'Who me?' and then I'd say, 'No, not you!' with my characteristic, cavalier panache! But you went and ruined the gag!"

The wench pressed her lips into a mocking imitation of a kiss. “Oh, I’m sowwy. Would you like to start over from the beginning and try again?”

Lothario stamped his feet. “That never works! Look, it obviously wasn’t supposed to be you, wench, because my true love actually has a name. And your ass is not worthy to be compared to herself!”

A buxom young halfling woman with curly blond hair and a plain, sensible face gasped at this news. She had spent the entire service staring wanly at Lothario, and her disappointment was transparent on her face. “Lothario! You never told me you had a main squeeze! Who is she?”

Three more halfling girls, each with hair of a different color, all hopped up and down, screaming. The first was a freckly, ginger-headed lass with an hourglass figure. The second was a dimple-cheeked brunette, who was diminutive even by halfling standards. In contrast, the third was relatively tall

and slender, also by halfling standards, and stood out from the crowd thanks to her olive skin and raven-black hair. All three roared, all at once, "Me! He means me!"

Then all three scowled at one another and immediately pounced into a three-way brawl, screaming obscenities. Their parents, who were all blushing with humiliation, pleaded with their daughters to stop, but were studiously ignored by the three voluptuous combatants.

"You saucy skank! I'm his girlfriend! He's gonna' marry me, sooner or later!" screamed the brunette.

"No way, you carbunculous cow! He loves only me! He said so himself!" screeched the redhead. [Proper grammar would have been "carbuncled" rather than "carbunculous," but she was pretty heated.]

"Sulfurous sluts! Why would he choose little girls like you, when he can have a real woman?" squealed the dark-skinned woman of raven-colored hair.

But the fight was broken up by the buxom blond, who thumped the three younger girls sharply on the head, each in turn, with two fingers. “Enough of that hullabaloo, you girls. Honestly, we’re in church!”

Clutching their aching heads, all three of the jilted lovers roared with rage and whipped out makeshift weapons (that could all double as spanking implements), before entering into what could only be described as a dramatic battle animation sequence. (They probably watched too many foreign cartoons.) The redhead pulled out an ornate, rose-handled bullwhip, which she flourished dramatically; the petite brunette unsheathed what at first appeared to be an over-large sword strapped to her back, but was in fact a heavy, two-handed spanking paddle; and the black-haired beauty produced a pair of cat-o’-nine-tails, which she brandished like nunchucks. Bellowing battle cries, they charged at the older, buxom blond.

Unfortunately, the trio of immature girls hadn't yet learned never to pick a fight you can't win. Using practiced mixed-martial arts maneuvers, the blond bombshell brilliantly blocked and deftly disarmed her three attackers...before thumping them each on the head a second time. "Knock it off, you three, or I'll give you all spanked bottoms to match the temple wench's!"

Then the blond sighed and looked to the girls' befuddled parents. "And as for you folk, do make an effort to control your daughters! Assert your authority!"

"Here, here!" cheered old Sister Kolhändler.

The blond flashed a furious, maternal look at Lothario. "Lo-lo, I warned you that juggling three girlfriends would bring you nothing but trouble! You know I'm always right about these things. Now, who is this winsome lass of whom the poets sing?"

All the other halflings glanced knowingly at the blond heroine who had first disrupted (and then restored order to) the ceremony, before looking back at the befuddled bard to await his answer. John Wilkes noticed the mysterious, hooded woman at his side bury her face into the mantle of her cloak to hide her snicker.

Lothario froze. “I cannot say! For the identity of my muse—my angel, my love, my queen—must remain...a secret! Though my romantic, farcical verse may well hint at the nature of my affections!”

“I think it’s me!” sighed the wench, in mock imitation of a swooning, romantic female lead.

Baring her fangs, the buxom young blond woman charged forward to claw at the wench with her nails, before she was thankfully held back by the congregation. “What? Are you trying to seduce poor little Lothario? You bitch! I’ll kill you!”

Lothario started to sweat profusely as he helped restrain the flailing young woman. "No, Willendorf—*OUCH!*"

Before Lothario could finish, Willendorf (who was of course the buxom blond) accidentally kicked him in the groin, her fingernails scraping wildly against the young man's perfect face as she fought against the throng holding her back.

The outrage sparked the tempers of the trio of Lothario's potential girlfriends, who broke loose from their parents' grasp, wielding their spanking implements, unable to choose between Willendorf, the temple wench, or one another for their first target.

The following scene was pandemonium. Every time Lothario, or Mr. Sandiman, or Lady Bridget, or one of the parents attempted to seize one of the girls, another broke free. The wench turned back and forth, looking over either shoulder, her fangs bared as she prepared to defend herself. The spanking

horse bench rocked dangerously back and forth as the wench lunged to scratch at each of the three young women before they could scratch her. The redhead ducked and slashed her nails across the wench's exposed buttock. The wench howled and stabbed at the redhead so furiously that the hot-headed halfling stumbled backwards, crashing into the other assailants, before they all turned on each other, before they all spotted Willendorf as she struggled to shove past them. Willendorf, now forced to defend herself from her three attackers, halted her own attack on the wench to assist with crowd control, disarming the three violent young women and barking instructions to their parents on how to properly hold them in place. Even without their weapons, the three young women were still able to scratch, bite, and kick. But the fact they were all distracted fighting with one another, while Willendorf was the only competent martial artist of the four, brought the grudge match to a speedy conclusion.

Once the threat was contained, Willendorf rolled up her sleeves and waved her finger at the young women's parents. "For shame! If you want my advice, those daughters of yours need a good, bare-bottom spanking, just like the wench gets!"

The three young women rolled their eyes dramatically.

The redhead smirked as her mother and father held her clenched fists on either side. "Don't be absurd, sweet-cheeks. We're no elven wenches. We're proper halfling ladies...or I am, at least!"

The brunette scowled, waving her hand so forcefully she shook her hapless father, who was straining to hold her back. "Yeah, everyone knows spanking is uncivilized. It's fine for elves, and maybe low-class types, but I'm sophisticated. A handsome, artistic bad-boy like Lothario deserves a high-class woman!"

The black-haired woman sneered, ignoring her mother who was silently pleading with her daughter to hold her tongue. "Well, that leaves you two out of the running. A poet of Lothario's genius requires something more exotic, more...erotic. Man, I wouldn't mind winding up across his knee. But the idea of spanking a halfling is completely absurd. We're the children of the Lady, after all. Isn't that right, Lady Mother?"

Bridget swallowed, not prepared to deliver a sermon on such a culturally sensitive topic at such short notice. "Well, it's true that the Lady only makes use of spanking wenches because she finds poetic, ironic justice in watching elf maidens brought so low...though theologians do argue whether certain halflings could benefit from the same treatment, in extreme circumstances. On the other hand, the scriptures clearly teach that a halfling must never be whipped nor degraded in the manner that a temple wench is treated..."

Bridget craned her neck, trying to get the attention of the three young women's parents. "But what is also clear from the scriptures and from the traditions of the Lady's apostles is that the Lady certainly does not forbid gentle corporal punishment, applied by loving parents in domestic settings, to correct bad behavior."

All three of the young women froze and instinctively clutched their bottoms. They had never considered the possibility of a halfling lady being spanked like a lowly elven maid, and certainly not themselves!

The feisty redhead was first to object. "Absurd! I don't care what the scriptures say. My booty, my choice!"

The brunette pouted. "Yeah, I'm far too big for a spanking." (It did not occur to her that she was one of the least big persons in the room, second only to young Kornblume.)

The tall, dark, black-haired halfling woman held up her nose and gestured to the temple wench. “If you want to spank someone, spank the wench! She started it!”

“Yeah, get the wench!” roared the redhead, breaking free of her parents’ clutches and snatching up her bullwhip.

“Crucify her! Boil her in oil!” bellowed the brunette, recovering her two-handed paddle sword.

“Skin her alive!” hollered the raven-hair, yanking her cat-o’-nine-tail nunchucks out of her poor, devoted mother’s hands.

All three put aside their quarrel with one another long enough to renew their attack on the wench, but before they could enact their plan to flog her to death, the wench silenced them all with a menacing stare.

The sílf-dorcha are an ancient people, with skills in dark magic that precede recorded history. Despite

the spanking wench's absurd position, the primal, predatory nature of her evil eye was unmistakable. Every halfling child had heard bedtime stories about a dark elf coming to get naughty children who disobeyed their parents. "You know, maybe you should ask your parents to spank some sense into you. I don't think you'd survive it if I had to teach you a lesson...in self-defense of course."

The effect was instant. All three of the young women dropped their weapons and turned around to rush to their parents, trembling.

Bridget stamped to the altar and planted three solid *smacks* on the wench's backside, forcing her to shut her eyes and break the magic of her death stare. "None of that dark elf sorcery, wench! It's my responsibility to guide the lost sheep back to the flock, not yours. Hold your tongue."

The wench winced, clenching her teeth. "...But they were threatening me!"

"Which is the only reason I'm not putting you under church discipline...for now. Consider yourself lucky."

But the wench's evil eye had already had its intended effect. The redhead was already weeping softly. "I'm sorry Mom! I'm sorry Dad! I should have listened to you!"

The brunette buried her face in her father's chest. "Don't let the scary dark elf get me, Daddy!"

The raven-hair held up her hands imploringly. "Forgive me, Mother! I'll be good!"

Her mother sniffed, before deftly lifting up the skirt of her daughter's slinky dress and pinning it in place with a hairpin. "Yes, you will, because I'm going to spank you! I see now that you're long overdue for one!"

The brunette's father nodded curtly, before doing likewise, using his diminutive daughter's elastic belt to hold up the skirt of her dress. "I agree! I never

should have trusted that pop psychology, gentle parenting nonsense!"

The redhead, who had vaguely suspected she might get a spanking before, stiffened as her mother lifted her skirt, and her father hooked it in place with one of the paper clips he always kept handy. "No, Dad! Not a spanking! You've never hit me once!"

"Well, I'm not going to hit you, but I am certainly going to spank you, until your bottom matches your hair!"

The redhead was wearing cheeky briefs decorated with hot-rod flames, emblazoned with the words, "Too Hot to Handle!"

The short brunette wore a cute pair of hipsters decorated with patterned illustrations of a stack of pancakes, bearing the slogan, "Short Stacks for Life!"

The raven-hair had the most scandalous choice of undergarments: a lacy, black thong, stamped with a

small image of a d20 die, and bearing the legend: "Roll a Persuasion Check."

"But...but...but!" stammered all three girls, before their parents removed their undergarments simultaneously, revealing all three of their bare butt, butt, butts!

"Not on the bare, Daddy!" pleaded the brunette, as she failed to cover her plump posterior. As she clenched her butt cheeks, they seemed to smirk, revealing two cheerful dimples that matched the ones on her regular cheeks. She had a mole on the right flank of her pearish hips, in the shape of a heart: her very own, no-longer-private beauty mark!

"This isn't like my romantic fantasy novellas at all!" wailed the raven-hair, whose round rump was naturally dark-skinned, but also revealed a distinct tan line from her recent time sunbathing in an exclusive desert resort, along with a tribal tattoo tramp stamp.

"Mom! Dad! Please, oh please, not here!" blubbered the redhead, clutching at her briefs, before they were tugged from her grasp, revealing a pale, freckled, heart-shaped bottom to match her face. By now, she had resigned herself to the fact that she was going to get spanked, and her only hope was to throw herself at the mercy of the court.

"You had no shame misbehaving in public. Perhaps you should get your spanking in public, just like the wench! What do you advise, Lady Mother Füdlewhopper?"

Fortunately for the three foolish young ladies, and not so fortunately for the loyal viewers of John Wilkes' blog, Priestess Bridget intervened. "I agree that a spanking would not be out of order for these three miscreants, but I must insist it be conducted in private. Remember, they are the Lady's favored halfling children, even when they sin, and fall short of her wisdom. It's not like they're a common temple wench, worthy only of derision."

The women's parents agreed and escorted their bare-bottomed daughters outside, chatting about how they ought to get together to compare notes on disciplinary techniques. Now censured, all three went meekly along with their perp walk. In the time it took the families to reach the door, the single mother and the single father had already started to hit it off, commiserating on the difficulty of raising a spirited daughter alone, and the red-headed husband and wife had eagerly invited everyone to their private, family getaway cabin in the woods, where they could all put their naughty girls through a week-long "spanking boot camp" together.

The three spoiled young women sniffled, whimpered, and gripped their behinds, already anticipating their new lives in a world where even proper halfling ladies could still get spanked, when they needed it. There's nothing like the prospect of a first, well-deserved spanking to make you reflect on just how much you deserve to be spanked, and just how often you've deserved it in the past.

The garage door of the temple slammed shut behind them, and that's an end to their part in this tale. Maybe we'll see more of their fate in a sequel. Who knows?

With that, divine order seemed to have been restored to the halfling temple.

"Young people these days. No sense of propriety!" grumbled Sister Kolhändler.

Willendorf sighed with relief. "Well, I can't say they didn't have it coming, after that little outburst. Now, Lo-lo, where were...we?"

At the sight of the wench, Willendorf remembered her former fury. "That's right! That succubus of a spanking wench is trying to seduce my Lothario!"

Sprinting forward from the congregation, Willendorf easily knocked aside a stunned Lothario. Then she landed a furious flurry of *slaps* to the wench's backside, swinging both her right and left arms like a boxer landing a series of wild haymakers.

"Don't! You! Dare! Corrupt! My! Best! Friend! Lothario!"

Wheezing, Lothario crawled forward to grasp Willendorf's ankles. "No, Willy! It's not the wench! It's someone else! I swear!"

At the sight of the supplicant Lothario, Willendorf paused her assault, looking mollified. "...Oh! What a relief!"

Oblivious to Lothario's pain, Willendorf squeezed his cheeks between her palms, then glanced around the temple with a minxish smile, especially at the other halfling women. "Come on, Lo-lo, you can trust me. After all, we've been bestest friends forever since we were in daycare! Just whisper her name in my ear, I won't tell a soul!"

Lothario's face went pale as he tried to speak, his cheeks being pressed firmly in Willendorf's vice-like grip. "But, Wiwwy-doo? Didn't you hear my

opening soliloquy? My verse contains clues to the identity of my one, true love!"

"*Ooooo!*" cooed Willendorf, releasing Lothario's face and clapping her hands. "So I've got to guess the riddle first? This is so exciting!"

Willendorf hopped in place, before skipping back to her place in the congregation. "No one interrupt! I've got to hear every second of this!"

The wench whistled softly. "I think I know who it is!" she said in a teasing, sing-song voice.

"No! Don't spoil it!" howled Lothario, rushing to the wench, waving his riding crop frantically.

"Spoil it! I want the spoilers! Who is she?" cheered Willendorf.

The wench seemed to be rolling the delicious secret over her tongue like a piece of candy, before Lady Mother Bridget scampered to the altar with surprising swiftness and landed her staff sharply

across the wench's backside. With a roar, the wench hopped in place with such force, the horse bench lifted off the ground, before she smacked back down in place atop it. The thin sash fluttered to the floor, leaving the wench with nothing to protect her floppy breasts from grazing against the splintered wood.

"Oh dear!" squeaked Kornblume's mother, before covering her daughter's eyes.

"Aw, but Mom! Lemme' see!" fussed Kornblume.

Kornblume's father waved a finger reproachfully, though his daughter couldn't see it. "No Kornblume, this isn't for children's eyes."

Kornblume sighed. "Yes, Papa."

Lady Bridget waited until the wench ceased whining before lecturing her. "That's quite enough, wench. If you interrupt Brother Lothario once more, I'll have to provide you with some...gentle correction."

Trembling, the wench kept her voice measured as she slowly lifted herself back up. “Yes, Lady Mother.”

Bridget flashed Lothario with a furious glance, as if she was tempted to take him over her knee at that very moment. “Brother Lothario, when dealing with a wench, you must assert yourself. Do not let her dominate you.”

Lothario nodded, then pulled his peacock feather quill pen from his hat to write a note on his scroll. “Be...assertive. Got it! Lady Mother, what if I try repositioning the wench? Will that make the goddess more inclined to listen?”

Bridget sighed, then smiled. “The Lady is not a vending machine. She cannot be easily tricked into giving us what we desire. To please her, you must offer up your very best efforts. Use your wits! Nevertheless, it might be a good idea to reposition the wench. What do you have in mind? ...No, don’t

whisper it to me. Take charge of the wench. Command her!"

Lothario hastily put away his scroll and feather quill, before tripping to the other side of the horse-shaped bench to stand face-to-face with the wench. "Wench! Stand up!"

The wench obeyed. But with her ankles still strapped to the feet of the bench, she was forced to twist her legs to the side as she stood, bowlegged, and rested her weight on the wooden horse's carved rump. Some of the congregation chuckled at the sight of the horse's tail poking out from below the wench, creating the optical illusion that she had a horse tail attached to her own ass.

Lothario looked nonplussed. "Oh, someone will have to undo the restraints. I can—"

Bridget snapped. "Don't help her. Just give her the marching orders. If the wench's restraints need

adjusting, Mr. Sandiman is right here to handle that for you."

After all the excitement, Sandiman, who was not a lover of poetic verse, had shuffled to one of the corners of the temple to rest against the wall. He was near dozing off when he heard his name being called, and shuffled forward with a start.

Sticking out his tongue, Lothario hastily made another note on his scroll, looking more confident. "Very well! Wench, I order you to move your own bench in place. Spin it around so that the horse stands perpendicular to the altar...And Sandiman, don't help her. The wench can manage."

The wench's eyes went wide. She looked imploringly to Lady Mother Bridget, her lips forming the word, "But!" But her complaints died in her throat as she eyed the priestess' staff. With her legs still restrained, the wench was forced to scootch the bench inch by inch, pressing her legs into the splintering wood for leverage. The full weight of

her buttocks sank onto the horse's tail beneath her, and when a new sliver dug into her lower cheeks, the wench whinnied like a pony and tottered in place. All this created the illusion the wooden horse was prancing in a playful circle, while the wench looked like a rather inept horse rider, close to being bucked off.

The audience's titters of laughter rose to roars at this sight, until the wench finally scootched the bench to the correct angle, and struggled to catch her breath.

In his element, Lothario enjoyed the laughter. "...Now you may remove her restraints, Mr. Sandiman."

The wench's head snapped up, scowling as she realized Lothario's orders had deliberately made her job as difficult as possible. But when she heard the laughter greet Lothario's punchline, she remembered what it meant to be a temple wench. The injustice, the final insult added to her injury, all

meant to add to her deliberate degradation. She felt the tears returning, and with a sharp breath, willed her eyes to remain dry.

When Sandiman had finished releasing her restraints, the wench couldn't resist the urge to rub her throbbing ankles, not caring how absurd she must look bending forward so far to reach them.

Lothario barked his next order. "Now, approach the horse, as if to mount it, side saddle, like a proper lady. But seeing as you are not a proper lady, just bend over it instead. Bottoms up, and facing the audience."

The wench grimaced, but obeyed. Things were finally getting back to normal, and as long as she was facing away from the congregation, it would be easier to hide any sign of a stray tear. By lying across the horse, the wench was forced into a sharp jack-knife pose, her bottom thrust uppermost. As expected, Lothario ordered Sandiman to secure the wench's wrists and ankles again, but at the new

angle, this meant the wench's legs and arms had to be spread out wider to lock her in place, until the once-loose nylon ropes that bound her hands and feet went taut.

Refusing to give her tormentors any further satisfaction, the wench pressed her lips shut as Sandiman tugged at her legs to try and force them to the restraints, until the nylon rope dug into the meat of her legs.

Lady Mother Bridget's voice interrupted, surprisingly gentle. "Hold on, Mr. Sandiman. Loosen her bonds so that they don't cut off her circulation. Remember, we are commanded by the Lady to treat our wenches with utmost kindness!"

Sandiman adjusted the wench's nylon ropes, giving them a few extra inches of give. It was just enough. The wench was now fastly secured in place, just like Sister Kolhändler preferred, but Lothario had discovered an even more humiliating pose.

Well, at least I have my loincloth, thought the wench.

With a *click*, Lothario unfastened the wench's loincloth, and yanked it away, like a magician performing the tablecloth trick.

The congregation exploded with laughter.

"What? What's so funny?" growled a grumpy-looking Kornblume, her eyes still covered.

Lothario produced his riding crop from his sleeve. "Now, wench, as I was saying before my love sonnet was so rudely interrupted, my love has a name, and a great ass! And though you certainly have a large ass, it positively pales in comparison to my muse's perfectly pale posterior!"

"I always knew he was an ass man!" roared Willendorf, slapping her knees with mirth, before playfully smacking her own rump. "Go on, Lo-lo! Give her a scorcher, for me!"

Lothario obeyed, and thanks to the wench's new position, he was able to land the stroke on a sensitive spot on the inside of her crack, leaving a heart-shaped mark on the previously unmarked territory. "Fortunately, wench, you do have an ass, and, however stout your ass may be, it shall suffice to suffer my stout blows!"

The wench howled as she felt the next *lash* of the riding crop mark her inner cheek, an inch below her anus. Slowly, but surely, Lothario was ensuring every square inch of unspanked territory was receiving proper attention. "Love, the ancient poets tell us, is all we need. Hogwash! What is love without sex?"

"Oh, my goodness!" howled Kornblume's mother, forgetting to keep her daughter's eyes covered as she rushed to muffle her ears.

Kornblume blinked and adjusted her thick glasses, eager to see what she was missing. "Huh? What is...sex?"

Kornblume's father quickly rushed to cover his daughter's eyes, and Kornblume only pouted. "Ah, man! How am I ever supposed to learn about my religion?"

Lothario projected his voice to be heard above Kornblume's family squabble. "Yes, sex! For eros, that amorous archer, hath let his arrows fly, belike a pricking dart! And I was but a boy, when first love stung my heart!"

On the word "heart" he applied his crop to the wench's inner thigh for emphasis. "I gazed upon the white, full moon of my fair muse's face, long 'ere I saw the new moon of this dark elf's...ace."

He ended the couplet a bit lamely, struggling to find a rhyme for the word "face," but a stroke of the riding crop to the wench's ass made his artistic intention clear.

Willendorf hummed dramatically, unconcerned that she was interrupting. "Hmm, so that means

he's known this gal for a very long time. I must know her!"

"Now, sex, I fear, is not our wench's due. Chaste she remains, though she's a shrew." Titillatingly, Lothario aimed a smarting stroke of the riding crop between the wench's legs, perfectly on the lips of her exposed vagina. The wench moaned in response, drooling.

"But my muse, like little bird, flits from man to man. A shameless coquette, whose hide I'd like to tan!" Of course, Lothario emphasized the word "tan" with another stroke of the riding crop.

Willendorf accidentally snorted like a piglet, before whispering to her neighbors loud enough to be heard by everyone present. "Oh my, he fancies a dirty girl! Well, that would suit Lothario. Such a skirt-chaser, and a complete pervert...He's nearly as shameless as I am! That's why we're friends I think. We have so much in common!"

Lothario unleashed a volley of blows to cover the last of the wench's flabby, exposed thighs with fresh marks, until they flushed as red as her buttocks. "Nay, wench, I have no use for thy quivering thighs, nor the domain that there adjacent lies! For far too long, you've sat round, like a lump. In short, thou wench, thou art too plump! When you turn round, the full moon is eclipsed. You'd block the golden sun behind your hefty hips."

Willendorf scratched her golden blond hair as she puzzled over the riddle. "Let's see, the muse was supposed to be the full moon for the first part of the poem, but now it sounds like she's the sun, in contrast to the wench, who is the new moon. Sounds to me like we're looking for a lady with a pale face..."

"Probably a blond?" suggested Lady Mother Bridget.

Willendorf clapped her hands, her sunny yellow hair flopping up and down as she bounced in place. "Of course! He's fallen for a goldilocks!"

Lady Mother Bridget sighed. "Well, Brother Lothario, is that the last of your...poetry?"

Lothario nodded, his face a picture of self-assurance. "Indeed. So concludes my masterpiece! Is the Lady of Love, the Lady of Laughter, the Lady of Lashes not pleased? Surely now she will grant my wish!"

Bridget fidgeted her fingers. "Well, that's the thing. The Lady isn't a genie. She doesn't just automatically grant our wishes. It's more like she...opens a door for you."

Lothario fixed his cap, twirling the peacock feather between his fingers. "Yes, yes, a fine theological point of distinction! But, as for my performance, surely she was impressed?"

Bridget interlaced her fingers. “Ah, the rhyming couplets. Well, I admit I’m not in a position to judge classical poetry, but I’d say your performance was creative, and memorable. You got some great laughs, and you recovered well from the opening dud...”

“So, the Lady is pleased? She will hear my appeal?”

Bridget pressed her index fingers against her lips. “How to put this delicately?...Not quite.”

Lothario’s mouth hung open. “But it was perfect in every detail! It was high art!”

Bridget held up a hand, as if offering a benediction. “My child, sometimes the answer to a prayer is neither, ‘Yes,’ nor ‘No.’ Sometimes the answer is, ‘Not yet.’ Tell me, this...muse of yours. Have you ever tried telling her how you feel?”

“Well, no, that’s why I wrote the poetry. I channel my intense, manly feelings of unrequited love directly into my art.”

"Yes, I'm sure you do. But, hypothetically speaking, if the Goddess were willing to grant you a boon, would you ask her to help your unrequited feelings become...un-unrequited?"

"Nothing so crass as that! I know true love can not be forced. I only wanted some help asking a girl out on a date. What if she says 'No'? I need all the luck and/or divine intervention I can get!"

"That's perfectly reasonable. Unfortunately, I cannot tell you why the Lady has not deemed you ready to ask her for a boon. But I do know that sometimes, we have questions that can only be answered by exploring it for ourselves. Perhaps you are nearer to the answer than you think."

Lothario bowed his head, before he slouched back to join the congregation. "Such is the fate of a visionary! It is our lot to suffer in this life, struggling on in the thin hope that our genius may one day be appreciated! Yet I will not blame the Goddess. Clearly, she enjoys a good tragedy!"

The moment he returned to his place, Willendorf clapped him across the back. “Buck up, Lo-lo. I’m sure if you just ask this muse of yours out, she’ll be all over you. She’d have to be blind and stupid not to see a guy like you is a real catch!”

Lothario sighed. “Thank you, Wiwwy-doo. You always know just what to say.”

“...That’s it? All that, for nothing?” hissed the wench.

Lady Bridget scowled. “None of your whinging, wench. You’re here to offer up your bottom to the Goddess, not your irreverent questions.”

The congregation giggled at the sight of the wench trying to argue from her absurd position. The noise of the crowd muffled the sounds of the wench snarling.

“My...name...is...not...‘Wench’!”

Bridget strained her ears to catch the wench's last words. "Eh? Of course it's not your name, wench. You have no—"

The wench's breathing turned heavy as she strained at the leather thongs restraining her.

With a *pop*, the rusty nails that held the leather straps pulled free of the weathered wood of the spanking bench, first her wrists, then her ankles, and the wench stood to her full height, smacking the top of her skull against the low ceiling. The audience laughed harder at this, assuming this was some sort of prearranged comedy skit planned by Lady Mother Bridget. But the Priestess was mortified.

With a roar, the wench ripped the tattered remains of the leather restraints off her wrists and bellowed. "Stop laughing! Silence! All of you, just shut up!"

"Oh, shut up yourself, you old hag!" barked the cloaked woman, throwing back her hood. John

Wilkes blinked. The young woman standing next to him was a dark elf. Apart from her height, she was practically a shorter, mirror image of the nameless temple wench. But as Wilkes looked more carefully, he saw the young woman had bright white hair in a pixie cut, unlike the wench's absurd, silvery pigtails.

The wench's anger disappeared, replaced by pure shock. "N-Nelnēae?"

Lady Mother Bridget recovered her wits just in time. With a flick of her finger, she activated the magic nylon ropes tied to the wench's wrists and ankles. They began to vibrate and steam before the ropes magically tightened like shackles, snapping the wench's wrists and ankles together. As her legs were bound, the wench had to hop forward awkwardly to catch her balance, barely avoiding face-planting on the cobblestone altar floor.

The wench snarled once in protest, trying to stumble back up to her feet, before the cords of the nylon rope spun through the air, hogtying her

hands and feet together below her. She tripped, and this time her face smacked against the floor, her rump pointing high in the air behind her, before the magic of the rope seemed to spin her around onto her back, and lift her hands and feet up into the air above her. The crowd roared with delight.

Bridget wiped a bead of sweat from her brow. The halfling congregation hadn't noticed, but the wench had just deliberately defied an order. Acting like nothing was out of the ordinary, Bridget gestured to the short, dark elf woman. "Good folk, I had planned this to be a surprise for you, but today we have two esteemed guests visiting our humble temple. May I present: Nelnēae Megwandir."

Nelnēae blushed, her blue-black face flushing purple, as she fumbled to pull her hood back up.

Bridget chuckled jovially, but she also tapped her staff sharply against the floor. "Oh, no point skulking in the corner, young lady. If there's one

thing a halfling can't stand for, it's letting a welcomed guest go on feeling unwelcome."

Nelnēae bowed briskly at the waist, as if by force of habit. "Thank you, Lady Mother. You are too kind. Good folk, your priestess was so good as to invite me to witness your ceremony. I am a humble representative of the Kuukeiju Investment Syndicate. Please pay me no mind."

"Oh, come now, you can't leave out the best part."

Nelnēae clutched her arm. "But...don't your people discourage dark elves from using their names? Or discussing their past lives?"

It occurred to Wilkes that she must be young, at least by dark elven standards. He had heard rumors that a dark elf's adolescence could last a hundred years, but if Nelnēae was not a teenager, she certainly carried herself like one.

"No! Don't say anything!" growled the wench. Unfortunately, the nylon ropes were now holding

her in what was basically a diaper position, her fleshy sit spots fully exposed. This meant there was no protection for the wench's upturned buttocks as Bridget snapped her staff across her target, with a practiced flick of her wrist.

As the wench groaned, Bridget turned her attention back to Nelnēae. "You've already told us your name, dear. And that rule is for our elven slaves, those who chose to take the oath of their own free will. You are not under any such obligations. If you don't say more, I'm afraid my flock will begin to gossip, and we can't have that! Tell us your story."

"No, no, nooo!" mewed the wench, but her voice cracked. The once tall, proud dark elf was twisting in place on the floor, looking up at the younger dark elf with imploring eyes, like a whipped puppy.

Nelnēae's foot twitched, as if she wanted to run and hide, before she straightened herself to her full height, just an inch shy of the low-hanging rafters.

"Very well. In that case... the dark elf you call your temple wench... is my mother!"

The halfling congregation ooh'd and ah'd appreciatively. Willendorf craned her neck to whisper into Lothario's ear, loud enough to be overheard by all. "This is just like the reality TV show!"

The wench ceased whimpering long enough to bark. "No! You can't do this to me! I'm a—"

Bridget swung her staff, with just a bit more force, across both the wench's already scorched, red butt cheeks. The wench made a noise that sounded like a mix between a sneeze, a battle cry, and a baby's wail. "*Schnff–Grrrooaaahrr–haaaa–wa-haaaah!*"

Satisfied that the rebellious wench was now properly censured, Lady Mother Bridget raised her hands to silence the murmuring crowd. "Yes, it is true! Young Miss Nelnēae reached out to me with a perfectly charming letter, asking about our temple

wench's situation. And although we gently discourage our spanking wenches from speaking about, or even thinking about, their previous lives, before making their oaths of service to the Lady...given the circumstances, I asked for a special dispensation from the High Priestess herself! Nelnēae, would you care to spank the wench?"

The wench fought to catch her breath. "N-Nuh-Neelllnēae! Don't you dare! D-don't d-do this to meeeee!"

This time, Bridget was so focused on Nelnēae, she forgot to silence the wench with an additional stroke.

Nelnēae narrowed her eyes. "... I'd be honored."

The wench made a sucking sound, realized her nose was clogged, and laid her head back on the cobblestone floor, unable to speak. She managed to wipe her eyes with the nylon cords binding her hands and feet, though this only forced her to

thrust her upside-down buttocks up even higher. Dimly, she could make out the sounds of her daughter questioning the halfling Priestess. “Is it alright if I don’t know your customs? I don’t want to offend your people. You can correct me if I don’t do it properly.”

Bridget beamed. “halfling traditions are like signs along an old road. They’re there because the goddess wants to protect us from the dangers of the forest. But they’re not walls. Oftentimes, we must delve into the forest, and chart new paths. And after all, you are not a halfling, under the Lady’s dominion. But you are our honored guest, and you may deal with the wench however you deem fit. All I ask is that you remember this slave is our precious property. Please avoid damaging it beyond repair.”

A thin beam of light from the overhead lamp flickered across Nelnēae’s face. She could have been smiling, oh so slightly. Or it could have been nothing more than a trick of the light, casting a thin

shadow at the corner of her black lips. “Wench, stand up, and face me. Mr. Sandiman, remove her bonds.”

Sandiman cocked an eyebrow at this instruction. Normally, the wench was never permitted out of her bonds during a ceremony, a tradition dating back to the early days of the red-bottomed missy herself. But Bridget nodded her head, and soon the wench was able to crawl back up onto her feet, now free of the magic restraints.

As the low ceiling forced the wench to hunch over, she now stood eye to eye with her diminutive daughter. The wench tried to maintain eye contact with Nelnēae, her face furious. The staring contest lasted a full ten seconds, before the wench finally blinked, and lowered her eyes.

Nelnēae didn’t look away from the wench as she snapped an order at the handyman. “Sandiman, fetch the clothing this wench stole from you. The

ones she was hiding away for herself. Lady Mother Bridget, your staff, please."

The Priestess hesitated only for a moment, before deciding that refusing to hand over her staff would look hypocritical after her stirring speech on challenging halfling traditions. After a minute of banging around inside the dark passageway, Sandiman emerged with the contraband motorcycle outfit. "Here it is, Miss. But I think they're a hair too big for you?"

Wordlessly, Nelnēae accepted the clothes from Sandiman, then offered them up to the wench, almost reverently. "Put these on, thief. Let's see how you look when you're playing dress up."

The moment the wench reached for the stolen clothes, Nelnēae casually dropped them. Breathing hard, the wench stooped to pick them up, her eyes full of menace.

But in her heart, the wench was terrified. Because she remembered she had once done the exact same thing to Nelnēae, while punishing her years ago.

No, don't give her the satisfaction of seeing me grovel! the wench thought.

The wench winced as she pulled the tight leather pants over her aching buttocks, but avoided making any sound of discomfort. She straightened up as high as she could, folding her arms and looking dramatically at Nelnēae, with an air of impatience. But with one look at Nelnēae, the wench knew her daughter could see right through her false courage. And they both knew it. "Turn around and grab your ankles, wench."

The wench complied, moving slowly, gracefully into position. In his corner, John Wilkes could hear the supple leather creak and stretch taut across the wench's plump bottom, as she bent over.

This time, Nelnēae smiled openly. Then she turned to face John Wilkes. He stiffened at the sight of her cold, distinctly dark elven smile. “Tell me, Mister Wilkes, which do you think would hurt more? To be caned while wearing a protective layer of tough leather, or to be caned while naked?”

“Well, to be caned while naked, of course. No protection and all that.”

Nelnēae swung a blinding stroke with the staff across the wench’s buttocks, wielding it more like a sword than a cane. The wench stiffened, but stayed resolutely in position. “So you might assume. But consider this: clothing may protect one from heat or cold, but it also constrains the flesh. And right now, the spanking wench’s fat, fleshy ass is stuffed good and tight into those absurd leather pants. See how they’re practically bursting at the seams?”

After landing a second blow with the staff, Nelnēae rested it on the ground, playfully balancing it against her index finger. “What would you say,

wench? Would you prefer to continue this caning over your stolen pants, or over your bare bottom?"

This time, the wench pressed her face against her knees, gritting her teeth, before answering. "Can't say I feel much of a difference. Perhaps you imagined the idea, the last time you were caned."

A third blow of the cane elicited a roar of protest from the wench. She rocked back and forth on the balls of her feet, but remained in position. Nelnēae clicked her tongue. "Don't be so vague. Speak clearly. You mean the last time you caned me, don't you, Mother?"

The wench didn't move. "...Don't call me 'Mother.'"

Nelnēae landed a fourth stroke of the cane. "And why not? Do you like the name 'Wench' better now? Have you grown fond of it?"

The wench swallowed. Ordinarily, she liked the comforting sound of the name 'Wench.' It both

reminded her of her humble position, and helped her forget her troubling memories of her former, prideful life. But at the moment, the wench hated the word "Wench." "It's no better nor worse than any other name, I suppose."

A fifth stroke of the cane. This time, the wench kicked her foot up reflexively at the knee, snarling, before she could register anything that was happening around her.

The wench's brain felt like it was swimming, but she dimly made out Nelnēae continuing her interrogation. "And, what of your backside? Do you find this caning no better, nor worse, than a caning across your bare bottom?"

As a fifth, brand new welt rose into place, pressing angrily against the inside of the seat of her pants, the wench knew the true answer. This was far worse than a caning over her bare bottom. "What I say doesn't matter. You'll just cane me however you please, either way."

The sixth *lash* of the cane was the worst so far. John Wilkes felt he finally understood the meaning of the phrase "Six of the best instructors." The wench howled like a werewolf, her knees trembling. She released her grip on her ankles for an instant, and began to straighten up, before she heard Nelnēae snicker teasingly. "What's the matter? Can't stand still without fidgeting?"

At that, the wench clutched her ankles even tighter, snorting for air, to keep from speaking.

Nelnēae tapped her mother's bottom a few times with the end of the staff. "We will continue this caning until you answer truthfully. Which hurts more? A caning over the bare backside? Or like this?"

"This...hurts...more..." grunted the wench, gulping for breaths between each word.

"Then ask me, politely, to stop caning you."

The wench twisted her spine to glare furiously at her daughter. “So you can just carry on caning me over the pants anyway, as a little joke? Or were you planning to have me bare my ass, so we can compare notes?”

Nelnēae swung the staff less like a cane, and more like a baseball bat. The force sent the wench barrelling forward, but she managed to catch herself with her hands. Trembling with either fear or rage, or both, the wench slowly lifted herself back into position.

Using the tip of the staff, Nelnēae lifted the puppy fat of the wench’s lower butt cheeks. “When I was young, you would have given me extra strokes for leaving position like that. And I intend to carry on caning you until I get a proper answer. If you don’t want this caning to last forever, then ask me, politely, to end your caning.”

“Just stop it, already. You made your point, brat.”

As expected, Nelnēae swung the staff like a baseball bat again, but this time the wench was able to anticipate the blow, and kept her balance. “Politely, wench.”

“Please...please, stop caning me, Nelly.”

As the ninth stroke impacted the wench’s bottom, a shiver traveled up and down her spine, and through her legs, before she shrieked.

Nelnēae tapped the staff against her mother’s bottom. “Don’t ever call me ‘Nelly.’”

“...please, Nell..Nelnēae...please don’t do this to me.”

Mercilessly, Nelnēae landed a tenth stroke of the cane, but this time she used the traditional flicking motion of her wrist, rather than the home run derby baseball swing. The wench couldn’t hide the sobbing behind her voice as she bucked up, her hands flying to cover her buttocks.

"I will cane you as long as I see fit. Now, back into position. Then ask me, politely, to continue caning you, just the way you taught me to...And stop your sniveling."

The wench sniffed as she obeyed. "...P-please, continue caning me, mistress."

Nelnēae tapped her mother's backside to warn her of the coming stroke, then raised the cane high. The wench hunched her shoulders, bracing herself for another volley of cane strokes. But as Nelnēae whipped the cane down, she checked her swing at the last possible moment. The wench screamed in terror, only for the cane to bounce lightly off the seat of her leather pants.

The halflings, who had been terrified at the spectacle of this strict caning, tittered with laughter at the sight.

Nelnēae flashed a toothy grin. "There, that should suffice for a caning. At ease, wench."

As she heard the laughter building to a crescendo behind her, the wench collapsed onto her knees, and huddled on the floor.

Nelnēae turned and offered the priestess her staff. "I'm sorry, I'm afraid that wasn't very funny, by halfling standards. That was more of a traditional dark elf approach to caning. We do have some forms of torture that were considered quite droll among the ancient kuukeijut. But I'm not sure if the sense of humor would translate to a modern audience. Should I try something more...halfling?"

The Priestess swallowed as she accepted her staff, not sure if Nelnēae was trying to be funny or not, and equally terrified by both possibilities. "Oh, my! No pressure, my dear. Of course, we might benefit from experiencing another culture's...sense of humor. But I've always found you can't force funny. Just...do what comes naturally."

Nelnēae's hands lingered on the Priestess' hands, her face lighting up with revelation. "Ah! I see. You

know, I never favored caning. It always struck me as needlessly cruel, at least when I was on the receiving end. But, there is one more thing I've been dying to try, if it's not a bother. Do you happen to have a sturdy, high-backed chair? Without armrests?"

Priestess Bridget blinked, but before she could answer, Nelnēae started to chatter absent-mindedly, "Oh, what am I saying? Of course not, that's a big people thing. But if you have a little wooden stool, I think I could manage. I'd have too—"

Bridget shushed the adolescent dark elf, affectionately. "I know we have some sort of chair. It should be sized for big people. Mr. Sandiman, fetch it, if you please."

Sandiman pressed his face into his palm, before adjusting his trousers and delving back into the dark storage room to retrieve the chair. As he explored, the muffled sound of furniture being moved aside and boxes of nick-nacks being knocked

over echoed from the dark passageway behind the altar.

Nelnēae's eyes brightened as if she had just been offered a holiday gift, wrapped with a bow. "Really? You don't mind if I sit down while I deal with her? I know it's against tradition to be seated in the presence of your Goddess, but I was hoping—"

Once again, Bridget shushed the adolescent dark elf, this time more brusquely, as if she was resisting the temptation to spank some sense into the youthful dark elven maiden. "Yes, yes, dear. I think I have an inkling of what you have in mind for the wench. It's a tad unorthodox, but the rule against sitting is only a rule for the wench. For a halfling, it's a matter of personal conscience, but for anyone else, it's really no problem!"

At the mention of this, John Wilkes felt his knees and lower back throbbing, and wondered how long the halflings had intended to keep him stooping in

the corner before mentioning this minor point on their religious customs.

Lady Mother Bridget was growing more animated, waving her arms to start hyping up the crowd. “Go on! Tell us what’s in store for the poor wench. Anticipation builds up to the punchline!”

Nelnēae couldn’t hide her youthful enthusiasm, all her affected coolness and stoicism forgotten. “Well, you see, when I was in school, Mother tended to punish me frequently. I always hated the canings, but there was always something...different about regular over-the-knee spankings. Somehow, I never minded those as much, lying across Mother’s lap. And I always dreamed of giving her a spanking just like that, even when I was no taller than...well a halfling!”

Now that the terrifying caning was over, the halflings began to snicker again, both at the sight of the exhausted wench, and at their guest of honor’s growing excitement. The line about being no taller

than a halfling earned a hearty belly laugh from one congregant, and soon the rest joined in. But as the wench slowly recovered from the ordeal of her caning, she began to process what she could hear. And she didn't like it. At the sight of her daughter, the wench had determined to maintain a strict facade of stoicism, withholding her emotions as much as possible. But the ferocious caning had gradually worn down her resolve. She had cried fresh tears, not just from the pain itself, but at the humiliation of being brought so low, by her own daughter, no less.

The wench remembered the last time she had punished Nelnēae. She remembered how she would always lie, and tell Nelnēae that she would never use force to give her a spanking, and that Nelnēae needed to accept it of her own free will.

Of course, both of them had known that was a lie, since she had forced Nelnēae over her knee countless times, before paddling her thoroughly.

But Mother had enjoyed the fiction. She had enjoyed making Nelnēae stand with her hands behind her head, while baring her backside. She had enjoyed sending her daughter to fetch a sturdy wooden hairbrush, or a belt, or to cut her own switch. She had enjoyed making Nelnēae politely ask for her spanking, before beginning. She had enjoyed giving Nelnēae all the extra strokes for squirming or talking back. She had enjoyed extracting all the promises and pleas and apologies from her repentant daughter, long after she was well-chastened.

And most of all, Mother had enjoyed making Nelnēae stand and say, "Thank you for spanking me, Mother," before sending her to sit in timeout, or stand in the corner, with a bare, red bottom deliberately put on display for family and friends.

It was the ritual nature of it all. Anytime the stress and anxiety of life as a CEO had been too much, the matriarch of the Megwandir family had found a

perfect outlet for all her frustrations: Nelnēae's helpless little backside.

Before she became a halfling temple wench, the nameless wench had carefully suppressed that thought, afraid to admit it even to herself. But, for the past year, the memories of how she'd treated her daughter had haunted the wench, especially when she was near breaking down in tears. At those times, the wench had felt that this was her due, that it was her turn to play the part of Nelnēae, and for someone else to play the part of the matriarch of the Megwandir family.

Then the wench felt a sharp tug as Nelnēae pinched her by her long, pointy ear and lifted her to her feet. And to her terror, the wench knew her nightmare had become real.

Nelnēae had the maternal gaze down pat, as she shook her head. "All right, young lady, you've stolen from these good people. And now you're going to

pay the price. Stand up straight, and put your hands behind your head."

The wench started to obey automatically, then faltered as she ducked short of the rafters. But Nelnēae was having none of it, reaching around to land a quick *pop* on her mother's posterior. "Don't hunch! Stand tall, like a proper lady."

Feeling her eyes stinging, the wench twisted her head until she found a gap between the narrow wooden rafters, and stood as close as she could get to her full height. As she heard the halflings laughing, she knew she must look like her head was stuck in the ceiling, and wanted to scream.

Nelnēae clapped the wench's aching backside a second time to remind her to keep her hands in place, then slowly undid the belt buckle, and unbuttoned the front of the wench's leather jeans. "Are you proud of yourself? Prancing around in this spiky, foolish costume? Do you like to pretend you're not a slave? Well, no more pretending."

With a clean yank, Nelnēae neatly tugged down the wench's leather pants by the hem, just below her hips. The tight pant legs held them snugly in place, like leggings. "Now turn around, and show everyone what happens to naughty girls who steal."

Her elbows and head banging against the rafters, the wench struggled to obey. The moment the wench tried to lower her hands to maneuver past a cobweb, Nelnēae planted another *smack* across the wench's aching lower buttocks. "Keep your hands on your head, silly. Can't you remember simple instructions, wench?"

Tears welled in the wench's eyes, and as she choked on dust, she overheard the crowd's murmuring and cheering at the sight of her.

"Just look at the wench! She's in a pickle, ain't she?"

"Her poor bottom. I feel sorry for the wench..."

"No need to. She's only a spanking wench, after all. Not a person like you and me."

And as she heard the halflings repeat the word "Wench," over and over again, something snapped.

Sandiman returned with the high-backed chair, and despite his girth, it took all his strength to haul it. Wilkes noticed that the halflings had clearly guessed badly how big a "big person's chair" was supposed to be. Nelnēae discovered her bottom covered the entire narrow seat, despite her lithe, elven build.

Oblivious to her mother's building rage, Nelnēae adjusted the angle of her smallish chair, decided it was sturdy enough to serve, and patted her lap invitingly. It was as if Nelnēae was playing house and the wench was only her doll. "Now, wench, you're going to be getting a proper spanking over my knee. Come here!"

The laughter built to a crescendo. The wench trembled as she looked down at her daughter, wanting to beat her to within an inch of her life. "I...am...not...a...wench! I am your mother!"

Tearing at the ribbons that had kept her silvery hair in two, childish pigtails, the wench rounded on the congregation and snarled a war cry. Unfortunately, she forgot to pull her pants back up, which rather spoiled the intimidating effect.

"Do you know who I am? Do you know how many fortunes I have made? Or how many lives I destroyed to make those fortunes? How many centuries I have lived, before any of your grandfathers' grandfathers were even born? I am a queen!"

But the halfling audience only laughed harder. "Who is the wench talking about?" giggled a childish voice, which she recognized as Kornblume's.

"I don't see anyone grand like that! Only a no-name-havin' spanking wench!" bellowed Mr. Sandiman.

The wench spat foamy specks of spittle as she screeched to be heard over the din. “You nasty little rabbits! I could have you all skinned, then boiled, slowly, for a stew! I have a name! And my name would send you rats scurrying back to your holes! ...My! ...Name! ...Is—”

But before the wench could shout her true name with pride, the leather pants slipped down to her knees and tripped her up. She landed on something soft, like a cushion, and as she blinked, the wench saw with terror that she had fallen right across her daughter’s lap.

A single *swat* awoke the wench from her reverie. She wanted to stand up and kill everything in sight, including her own daughter, but after many years of indolent service to the halfling temple, the wench had grown soft, sedentary. As she strained, the wench realized that she was now too weak to fight her own daughter. There was nothing playful about Nelnēae’s voice anymore. She began to spank the

wench, aiming slowly and carefully, leaving a few seconds between each *smack*, so that the wench had time to feel the full effect of each.

"Shame on you."

CLAP!

"You can't even commit to your stupid vows, can you?"

WHACK!

"It's bad enough you made a fool of yourself on that idiotic reality show—"

THWAP!

"—bragging about how you were going to be the most famous spanking wench since the Red Mistress. As if that's something to be proud of!"

WHAP! SMACK!

"You made a laughing stock of the entire Megwandir family, and for what?"

THWACK!

The wench bucked, straining her back and kicking her legs uselessly. “Unhand me! Do you hear me, Nelnēae, I’m your—!”

“No! Don’t call yourself my mother. You lost that right.”

Nelnēae began to steadily increase the pace of the hand spanking, speaking loud enough to be heard clearly over the brisk clapping rhythm. “You know, I’d almost forgiven you. For the beatings, for the constant teasing.”

The wench hissed. “Is that what you’re mad about? That was nothing! Back in my day, my mother—”

Nelnēae landed a *clap* to each of the wench’s lower sit spots, the fat flesh jiggling wildly with each impact. “Shut. Up.”

It took another ten *spanks* to convince the wench to finally shut up, and Nelnēae continued her lecture

as if nothing had interrupted her train of thought. "I understood you meant it to be tough love. To prepare me for a cut-throat business. To prepare me to take over the clan. But then, after years of molding me, of punishing me for slacking off in school, of pounding the idea that I was going to be the clan matriarch one day, every single day, you just randomly decide to quit? To just leave that life behind and join a church? And not even an honorable, dark cult, but...this? Why? Because you were bored?"

The wench's mind scrambled. It was true, she had lived for centuries, enduring a terrible, lingering sense of banality. But it was more than that. For the first time in her life, the wench became conscious of something she had never been able to vocalize. Her past life hadn't merely been boring. It had been entirely without a sense of purpose.

"I...I couldn't stand that life! You don't understand, I had to get out! I had to—"

Nelnēae punctuated every word of her next sentence with a sound *spanking*. "This! Is! Not! About! You!"

The wench started to squirm as Nelnēae increased the pace of the punishment yet again. "Of course, you had an existential crisis, so what did you do? You left me holding the bag."

"But, my sisters! My sisters were supposed to help guide you to—"

"Oh, yes, my darling aunties! After they took their cut, they all decided to jump ship. So I had to take on all that responsibility once you left. I had to deal with the old rivalries and enemies you never prepared me for! I had to live the life you hated so much, since you couldn't be assed to lead the clan!"

"I'm sorry! I didn't think! I'm so—"

The wench was interrupted by another round of *spanks*, each acting as an exclamation point for Nelnēae's diatribe. "Don't! Say! I'm! Sorry! I don't

want to hear, 'I'm sorry!' A Megwandir never says, 'I'm sorry!' Remember?"

The *spanks* were coming down at a blinding speed now, and it became impossible for the poor spankee to mentally register each one. The furious sound of the spanking's pace, and the cumulative effect of the burn, was enough to snap the wench out of her fury. And without anger, she lost her last mental tool to resist the fear. The wench remembered screaming those exact same words, as she had thrashed Nelnēae for not saying she was sorry, before thrashing her again for daring to say, "I'm sorry."

"N-Nelly?"

"Never! Call! Me! Nelly! Ever! Again!"

The wench gasped, and started to say, "I'm sorry," before she corrected herself. "I'm so—No! Don't!"

"No! More! Apologies! No! More! Pleading! No! More! Excuses!"

The wench's mind raced, with apologies, pleading, and excuses, before she remembered something. She didn't have to put up with this. She was powerful! She was dangerous! "Stop it! Stop this right now! I'll destroy you all!"

"You'll do nothing. You have no more power. That ship has sailed. Want to know what happened to your precious Megwandir Family Conglomerate? I burned it to the ground. Turned over all the dark, dirty secrets to the authorities, sold the remaining assets at auction, and donated the little that was left to what you used to call 'bleeding-heart' charities. It's gone! You're stuck here. Now, you're nothing but a slave—a silly, little, red-bottomed spanking wench—forever and ever!"

The wench felt a pang of despair as the meaning of her daughter's words dawned on her, before a *spank* brought her to her senses. "No! *Ow!* I want out! *Ouch!* I don't—oh!—I don't want to be a spanking wench anymore! *Eeow!* L-Lady Mother

Füdlewhopper! *Yow!* I d-d-demand to see the High—aiee! I wanna' see the High Priestess! I demand my freedom!"

This news confused Nelnēae enough to pause the spanking momentarily. She raised an eyebrow as she cocked her head toward the Priestess. "Huh? What is she talking about? She can do that?"

To Nelnēae's confusion, she had accidentally stumbled across perfect comedic timing. The halflings erupted in fresh laughter. Lady Mother Bridget wiped tears of mirth from her eyes. "Oh heavens! Don't that beat all! Don't worry, wench. I'll get right on that. You should expect to hear back in the next few weeks...or the next few decades, at least!"

Her temper returning, the wench lost all sense of dignity. She flailed her hands and feet, throwing a temper tantrum worthy of a toddler. Her leather pants tangled around her ankles. "N-No! I mean it! I'll run away! I'll build an army, and return with

vengeance! If you don't free me, I'll make you wish you'd never been—"

But Nelnēae had heard enough, and renewed the spanking. "No! More! Threats! ...And that's another thing, how dare you threaten these people, after they took you in! I don't blame them for hitting you! You deserve every ounce of pain and shame you can possibly get! And if I find out you ran away, I'm spanking you like the brat you are and bringing you straight back here to make you apologize, and ask them—politely—to take you back, and spank you morning, noon, and night for a decade! And if you ever do manage to get kicked out, I'll make you wish you'd never been born! Do you remember saying that to me? You used to scream that at me while you beat my ass, until I really did wish I'd never been born. Well, I'll do you one better! I'm gonna' make you wish you'd never given birth to me!"

The halfling laughter died down, as it slowly dawned on them that this wasn't an act. Nelnēae was spanking and screaming with every ounce of force she could muster, oblivious to the wench's protests. At long last, the wench's will to fight gave out. Two tears poured down either of her cheeks. Finally, the wench managed to blubber, "I'm s-sorry, Nelly! I'm so, so sorry!"

Spitting with rage, Nelnēae roughly pulled the wench's own belt free from its loops. Realizing what was about to happen, the wench made one final, futile effort to kick free, before Nelnēae used the folded belt to land three sound lashes in quick succession. "Don't! Tell me! You're sorry!"

The wench screamed in terror and pain and despair as her daughter unleashed a volley of twenty *lashes* with the belt as fast as possible. The wench didn't even have time to mentally process the pain. She collapsed across her daughter's lap, bawling, straining to cover her backside with her hands and

feet. Roaring, Nelnēae easily subdued her mother's vain struggle, before delivering three, slower, more deliberate blows with the full strength of her arm. These ripped across the wench's backside with such force, they broke skin, and the wench's voice cracked as she screamed in agony. The last three strokes were the worst pain she had ever experienced in her entire life, and the wench could do nothing but lie on her belly, and take it. She couldn't even beg for mercy anymore.

Breathing hard, Nelnēae shook her throbbing right arm, which was trembling from the strain. But as she raised the belt high yet again, a wooden staff blocked her arm. The dark elf girl awoke, as if from a dream, and saw Lady Mother Bridget at her side. "Nelnēae dear, that's quite enough. You promised not to damage our property. But just look at our poor wench's backside."

“Spare me the religious crap! Don’t tell me I have to forgive this monster after what she...what she did to—”

Nelnēae froze as she saw the damage she had done. Sure enough, the long ordeal had taken its toll on the wench’s buttocks. The birches had left an angry pattern of flame, and welts from the rope, the cane, the riding crop criss-crossed over every square inch, even before Nelnēae had begun. Nelnēae’s use of the staff as a make-shift cane had left deep bruises, and although her dainty hand was far lighter than any implement, Nelnēae’s hand spanking had long ago left the wench’s bottom a mottled blue-purple color. Fresh blisters the size of Nelnēae’s palm began to form across the wench’s entire buttocks and thighs, pulsing and stretching. The belt had left deep, throbbing cuts that stretched all the way across her mother’s buttocks.

Instantly, Nelnēae felt tears of shame spilling down her cheeks. “M-mommy? I’m sorry!”

Mother and daughter both whimpered, “I’m sorry,” over one another, until Bridget sighed and tapped her staff. “Land sakes! I’ll have to use some minor healing magic on the wench’s buttocks. That will prevent any scarring, or blood clots. Really, you must never spank in anger, dear.”

By this point, Nelnēae was completely inconsolable, her cries matching the suffering wench’s in intensity. “I’ve become my mother! I swore I’d never be like her!”

But as Bridget’s healing magic took effect, the wench’s desperate, broken sobs softened to soft weeping. “There, there. You’re not the first person to pass on generational trauma. Though this is probably the first time I’ve seen it being passed in this direction. Now, try spanking her again, and I’m sure you’ll do better this time.”

As Nelnēae blinked, two tears spilled down her face and landed on her mother’s upturned bottom.

“Spank her? Again? But she can’t possibly take any more...”

Bridget pressed her thumb against her nose, and winked. “Have another look!”

Nelnēae glanced down at her mother’s behind. As her tears dripped down and impacted it like raindrops, literal steam rose from the wench’s scorched red caboose. Her buttocks could have passed for a hellion’s hindquarters, instead of a dark elf’s derriere. Then, the bruises faded to green and disappeared, the bloody cane marks scabbed and healed over, and the blisters peeled away, leaving fresh skin underneath.

The wench moaned, as her buttocks were restored to nearly perfect health, though it was still bright red. Unfortunately for her, the healing effect had also erased the numbness that had built up over time. A spanking tends to sting most at the beginning, before the brain gradually learns to diminish the urgent sense of pain to a faraway ache.

Now, the wench's bottom was completely sensitive again, as fresh as...well, a baby's bottom.

Bridget enjoyed both the spectacle of her magic at work, as well as the look on Nelnēae's face. "Now, I suppose you dark elves must have your own queer sense of dark humor, and I suppose there's no harm in that, for your own matters. But the Lady is very clear: our spanking wenches are to be tamed with nothing but kindness. The trick is to remind yourself you love her the whole time you're spanking her. Now, tell the silly wench what she needs to do, and make sure she understands why she's getting a spanking."

Blushing, Nelnēae examined her mother's backside, and tried to remember anything to do with spanking that wasn't marred by her childhood trauma. She remembered, once, her mother had spanked her for stealing candy, years before they had both become so involved in the family business, and said the first thing that popped into her mind.

"All right young lady, that was just a warm-up for making a fuss in public. Now, we're going to talk about what you did, and then I'm going to spank you properly. Stand up, put your hands on your head, and look me in the eye."

Quivering, the wench slumped off her daughter's lap and back onto her feet, and interlaced her fingers behind her head. Her tears had made her mascara run black smears down her shining cheeks, and her silver hair was in tangles, sticking to her face and nose. She hiccuped, then sniffled.

Nelnēae took a deep breath, and folded her hands before her. "Now, do you know what you did wrong?"

The wench tried to mumble something, perhaps a combination of Sorry's, Please's, No's, and her daughter's name, but Nelnēae shook her head. "No whining allowed. If you don't know the answer, say, 'No, Ma'am.' But if you do know the answer, say, 'Yes, Ma'am.'"

"*Hic*...Yes, ma'am. I stowe the costume..."

"Yes, even though you knew you weren't allowed to have it. And why did you do that?"

"...Buh...*Hiccup!* But I just wanna' to play pretend..."

Nelnēae patted her mother's bottom, just firmly enough to jiggle the puppy fat. "No making excuses. Why did you disobey, and steal the costume?"

The wench scrunched her face. "B-because...I'm a silly girl...ma'hm!" The wench squeaked a mangled version of the word "ma'am" after feeling another love *tap* to remind her of her manners.

"And what else did you do wrong?"

The wench's lip trembled. "An' I...I made a fuss during my spankin'...m'am..."

"That's right. And what else did you do wrong?"

The wench stuttered and stammered, then bowed her head as she recalled her many crimes. “I, I, I said naughty words and an’ an’...an’ I was mean to you...I was so, so mean...”

As the wench’s voice, and mind, began to clear, and she stopped dropping her consonants. “Nell? I’m so sorry! What I did to you was unforgiv—”

Nelnēae held up a finger. “Nope! I don’t want to hear no sorry’s. Not yet anyway. You’re gonna’ be sorry, soon enough. Excuse me, Mr. Wilkes. You’ll find my satchel behind you. Kindly open the flap on the front and show the wench what I brought for her. It’s a little, belated birthday present.”

Automatically, Wilkes found the pouch, and discovered a heavy, ebony hairbrush. Carved on the back in silver was a geometric representation of the phases of the moon, with a pale buttocks in place of the full moon. At the sight of the brush, the wench shook her head. “N-no...No, ma’am! Please, not

that! You can spank me! Gimme' a spanking, but please, not the hairbrush! Please, please, pl—"

The wench stiffened as she felt Nelnēae hold her in place with one hand, and reach around to plant a *swat* on her other cheek with her free hand, firmer than before. "Repeat after me: yes, ma'am. I will obey!"

The wench bounced in place on the balls of her feet. "Yes, maaa'hm! I'll obey!"

Nelnēae released her hold on the wench's hip and pointed toward the hairbrush. "Then go fetch your hairbrush, carefully, and tell Mr. Wilkes thank you for helping you get it for me."

Resisting the urge to sprint, the wench shuffled towards Wilkes, her leather pants, once her pride and joy, now hanging inside out and trailing from her ankles behind her. Stunned, Wilkes handed over the hairbrush and accepted the wench's polite

gratitude. Then she carried it back to her daughter, like a convict bearing the tool of her own execution.

By now, the wench's breath was short and strained, interrupted by jarring hiccups. She offered up the brush in both hands, balancing it on her palms. Without being coached by Nelnēae, the wench seemed to remember what came next, from previous experience. "I-I-I'm reh-reh-ready for my sp-spah-spanking, muh-m-mommy!"

Nelnēae shook her head as she accepted the brush. "Not quite. Take off the clothes you stole, fold them nicely, and give them back to the Priestess. And tell her you're sorry."

The wench complied, glancing nervously behind her back, aware of all eyes in the room on her naked form, before kneeling to offer up the stolen clothes. After the wench stumbled through her apology, Bridget patted her lightly on the head and pointed her back toward the inevitable: Nelnēae's lap. Too shaky to stand, the wench crawled on hands and

knees, resting her head on her daughter's lap, as though she wanted to make every blessed second count before the dreaded spanking began.

"Now, young lady, because you've been very naughty, you're going to be getting two extra spankings today. One is for how you spoke to me, which deserves a good spanking all by itself. The second is for letting down all these good folk who've been nice enough to take you in. The first spanking will be exactly like how we used to do it at home. Do you remember?"

The wench nodded, meekly. Of course, Nelnēae was referring to how her mother used to spank her when Nelnēae was little, but the wench was so exhausted and sorrowful, as she tried to remember those spankings, all she could think about was how she, the wench, was the one who deserved the punishment all along. In that moment, the wench fully believed that she was the chastised daughter, not the cruel mother, in her own memories.

Nelnēae patted her lap, and that was enough to encourage the wench to climb into place.

This time, Nelnēae adjusted the angle of her seat, deliberately, so that the wench's face pointed away from the congregation, and guided the naked wench across her right knee. Then Nelnēae switched the hairbrush to her left hand, to allow her right arm time to rest. The wench felt her legs dangling on either side of Nelnēae's right thigh, before Nelnēae secured her grip around the wench's waist and patted her bottom to get her attention.

The wench tensed as she felt Nelnēae rubbing the cool wood in circles against her red, hot bottom. "Now, once more, ask Mama to give you your spanking, and be polite."

Feeling her tears return, the wench sniffed, ashamed to be seen crying. "Puh-pwease, gimme' a spankin', Mommy!"

The first blow of the hairbrush *popped* across the wench's left butt cheek, sending ripples quivering through it. Thanks to the effects of the healing magic, the wench was now keenly aware of the fresh, smarting sting. For some reason, the wench felt a strong desire to not cry, and show her "mommy" she was a big girl now. And for the first ten strokes, she managed to resist the urge to cry bravely. But the next ten strokes took their toll, and as the burning built to a hot sensation, the wench squirmed to escape, and broke down crying.

The wench felt the next wave of tears fill her eyes, and as she closed them, she let them flow like waterworks. The moment she felt the relief that came with shedding tears, the punishment paused.

Nelnēae pointed firmly towards the wooden horse spanking bench. "That will do for spanking #1. Now, march straight over to your horsey, and stand behind it, so I can give you spanking #2."

Covering her exposed front in shame, the wench lifted herself shakily, and shuffled towards the dreaded bench, happy to have a moment's relief from the terrible ebony hairbrush. But the knowledge that she was about to be paddled further, and the memory of the terrible splinters, made her whimper, incoherently, as she approached the front of the bench and lowered herself across it.

Nelnēae patted the wench's bottom to get her attention. "No silly, not in front of it. I told you to stand behind it, this time...that's right, facing this way. You broke the straps when you threw your little tantrum, so this time, you'll just have to be brave and hold yourself in place, if you don't want extras."

Nelnēae gently guided the wench across the bench, so that this time, she was face-to-face with the audience. The wench bit her lip as she remembered all the people watching her, and averted her gaze.

Nelnēae brushed the wench's cheek. "Now, I want you to take a moment to look at all the people watching you, right now. Look into their eyes. These are the faces of the people you stole from. These are the people you promised to serve. But you've been disobedient. You broke your promise."

The wench craned her neck to look into her daughter's eyes. "M'sorry, m'sorry, please forgive me!"

Nelnēae silenced the wench with three quick love *taps* across each of her butt cheeks. "Don't say it to me. Say it to the people you wronged."

The wench looked up at the crowd of people watching her intently, and met their gaze, feeling their eyes focus on her face, and staring at the top of her upturned bottom behind her. Breathing hard, the wench imagined how stupid she must look, but with an effort, held her head high to apologize. "I'm sorry, people! I'm sowwy I was bad! I'll do better! I puh-p-p'womise!"

Nelnēae tapped the wench's bottom playfully, to warn her they were about to begin. "And what do you say, to be polite, before your spanking? What's the magic word?"

The wench let her next tears fall without a struggle, not taking her eyes off the crowd of halflings. "Please spank me, Mama!"

The hairbrush sank deep into the wench's right butt cheek, and at long last, she was getting the spanking she needed. The spanking she always wanted. The room erupted with howls of laughter, as the wench broke down into fresh apologies and begging. For a moment, the wench became lucid, and felt the absurdity of it all. She threw a hand back, only to hear Nelnēae bark at her to hold still, and that she had just earned extras.

Fighting for air as snot dribbled down from her nose, the wench nodded her head and lowered herself back into position, her attempts at apologies lost behind her quivering voice. The next round of

spanks landed with enough force, they overwhelmed the previous ache, and broke the wench down all over again.

In the end, she gave up on hoping for mercy, and decided to settle for justice. She screamed the words "Forgive me!" over and over, and ended by whimpering "Spank me! Spank me, Mummy!"

And finally it was over. Nelnēae brought the wench's bottom back to a consistent shiny, apple red color, but she restrained herself from using her full strength, and left no fresh bruises this time. In the end, she let the wench cradle her head on her shoulder and cry the remainder of her tears. To her own surprise Nelnēae found herself patting the wench on her back, and stroking her hair. "There, there, you silly thing. Spanking's all done. It's all over...now, what do you say?"

The wench fought to speak, between her racking sobs. "...Thank...thank you for sp-spanking me, mama. P-please...forgive me!"

Nelnēae let the moment hang. She had vowed to never forgive her mother for what she did. But Nelnēae understood that this poor, pitiable spanking wench was not her mother. The matriarch of the Megwandir clan had died, the day she had decided to become the spanking wench.

"I forgive you, dear. You're mommy's little girl."

The audience cooed with sympathy, especially Willendorf, who nestled her head on Lothario's shoulder. "Isn't it simply wonderful? Makes me want to be a mother!"

Lothario was too preoccupied with thoughts of spanking Willendorf to comment.

Even Kornblume's parents decided to allow her to witness this touching scene of repentance and reconciliation. "Man, I missed all the good stuff."

Sister Kolhändler sniffed, approvingly. "Well, she did a fine job putting the wench in her place. Pity she's not a halfling."

Lady Mother Bridget held up her hands for silence. "Wonderful! This is the most touching display of penitence I've seen in all my years serving the Lady. Nelnēae, thank you. You've reminded us all what love and forgiveness truly is. The Lady of Love is honored by your offering. Of course, you're not a halfling, and therefore not subject to the domain of the Lady, but I know she is well pleased with you!"

Nelnēae held up her hand. "Lady Mother, may I ask a favor? Would it be possible for my mo—for the wench to stay with me? You know, when she's not on duty?"

Wilkes had never heard a crowd collectively gasp before. It was strange, because it seemed to swallow all the ambient laughter in the room.

Bridget scratched her chin. "Well, ordinarily, only the most pious of saints could afford—I mean, would have urgent need of a temple wench, outside of the temple's normal hours. But, for such a splendid display of how to handle a temple wench, I

think you've earned the right to spend some 'quality time' together."

Bridget winked at the wench, who was still cradled in her daughter's arms like a baby. "And you are family, after all. Which reminds me, I think it's past time that we gave our wench a little nickname...Good folk, I propose we call her, 'Our Little Mama's Girl.' What say the Lady's children?"

A rousing cry of "Here, here!" greeted this suggestion.

Kornblume giggled. "Tee hee! It's 'cuz the wench still gets spankings from her mommy, and at her age!"

The wench blushed, and bowed her head. She remembered how her bold claim that she was destined to become the most famous spanking since the Red Mistress had been played on every halfling station to advertise the reality TV show. In the years since, she had languished in obscurity in this

backwoods temple, without so much as a demeaning nickname to act as a title.

Bridget put the tip of her staff under the wench's chin to lift her eyes up from the floor. "Wench, stand up and face me. There's one more minor matter we still have to discuss."

The wench complied, then had a moment of dawning comprehension as she remembered she was stark naked. She quickly covered her front, before Nelnēae clapped her firmly across the rump, and reminded her to keep her hands behind her head. The wench obeyed, her bare breasts and her triangular, silvery white bush now on full frontal display for the assembly, which inspired fresh roars of laughter.

Lady Mother Bridget slammed her staff to call for silence. "I'm afraid we must address the matter of your expressed desire to forsake your vows of obedience and submission to the Lady. So, you demand to see the High Priestess, do you?"

The wench shook her head. “No, Lady Mother! I...I didn’t mean it. I’m sorry I lost my temper.”

Bridget shook her head mockingly, to match the wench. “Ah, ah, ah! I’m afraid it’s too late for that. This is now a matter of church discipline. I’ll have to spend at least a week here, and take your confession. If you are serious about wanting to leave, then I must do everything in my power, to...persuade you otherwise.”

The wench gulped. “That isn’t necessary! I want to be a good spanking wench more than anything, really I do!”

“Then you have nothing to fear from an inquisition. Once I’ve taken your confession, we can...discuss your penance and absolution. Really, it’s my own fault for not giving you more attention. We’ve been far too lapse in keeping our Little Mama’s Girl’s not-so-little bottom the proper shade of red at all times. I’ll write to my other parishes to explain the situation.”

The wench stiffened, terrified, and enraptured at the thought of how her caboose was doomed to stay a constant, consistent crimson color in the near future. After feeling an encouraging love *tap* from her daughter, the Wench bowed respectfully. "Thank you, Lady Mother. I will submit to your guidance."

Bridget beamed. "In that case, why not start by doing your duty for the remainder of our congregation? Who here wishes to take a turn spanking our Little Mama's Girl, and petition the Goddess?"

When every hand in the room shot up, the wench glanced back nervously at her red bottom, which prompted a few giggles.

Noticing the wench's discomfort, Bridget spun their Little Mama's Girl around to display the wonderful results of the congregations' appeals to the Goddess for the day, so far. "My, my. This poor wench's goose looks thoroughly cooked. We may

need an alternative to the traditional spanking. Any suggestions?"

The wench audibly gulped, her mind racing to find an out. It was never a good omen when the halflings decided to get creative. "Don't you want to just heal my bottom? We can start again from—"

Bridget clapped the wench's butt, almost playfully. "Don't be absurd! Healing magic is only for emergencies...And don't interrupt!"

Nelnēae clapped her hands, smiling wickedly. "We could cane her thighs, front and back! She used to do that to me!"

"Or her stomach! Give it a good *slap* with an open palm, and it'll smart for days," blurted out John Wilkes. His drone spun to focus the camera on his face.

Nelnēae glided over to pull him from the corner, pinching his arm. "That's a deliciously sadistic

suggestion. Are you sure you haven't visited a halfling temple before, Mister Blogger?"

Wilkes' face turned as red as the wench's backside. "Oh, just an old hazing regimen from seminary school. We used to call it 'pink belly'!"

Old Sister Kolhändler stabbed at the air with her umbrella. "Flogging her back would be more traditional. Just use the soft deer-skin martinet, and you can cause plenty of discomfort, without risk of serious injury."

Little Kornblume bounced up and down on her father's shoulder. "Ooh! Rap her knuckles with a ruler...and then her palms! The school librarian did that to me, once!"

Lothario leered at the wench, with a face that looked like he was about to sprout devil horns. "Or we could spread her legs and lash her—"

Kornblume's mother clapped her hands across Kornblume's ears. "Please! There are children present!"

"The tits! Spank her big, bouncy boobies!" cheered Willendorf, playing with her own breasts to illustrate.

The cheers that erupted made the winner clear: "Spank her tits!"

Bridget pronounced her judgment. "Very good! A fitting way to illustrate how the Lady welcomes us to her...bosom. Of course, we can still give our wench 'the hot seat' with no risk of injury. Mr. Sandiman, if you would do the honors! You know, Nelnēae, it was quite inspired to have the wench face the congregation, so she could see all the eyes on her. We usually like watching her bottom bouncing about, but we'll have to work your idea into our regular routine."

At a gesture from the priestess, Mr. Sandiman threw on his work gloves, and produced the custom-built, wedge-shaped "seat," stuffing fresh stinging nettles into the net to serve as a cushion, and made a point of angling it so the wench would face the congregation. Now her delightful facial expressions of agony, and her naked chest, would both be in view.

The wench's buttocks clenched as she saw the "hot seat" before her. "Oh, really, I think my bottom could handle a bit more spanking. Why not—"

The nylon ropes flew back into place across her wrists and ankles, binding her once again, though this time, the ropes yanked her wrists behind her back and pulled them up tight against the small of her back, so that the wench's DD-cup-sized boobs were thrust forward, with no DD-sized bra to obstruct their magnificence.

Sandiman interrupted the wench's stalling tactics by pressing her shoulder down, forcing her to rest

her weight, fully, on the stinging nettles. The wench gasped as she felt them dig into her groin and ass, and the tickling sensation slowly began to build to an angry burning. There is a reason stinging nettles have been dubbed "the silent spanking."

Lady Mother Bridget Füdlewhopper reverently retrieved the birch bundle from the plaster statue of the Lady, undid the ribbon that bound the bundle, and held aloft a single birch switch.

No sooner had the wench had time to process that her buttocks were burning, than she felt the first stroke of the switch across her bare breasts and Bridget demonstrated the proper technique, aiming blows expertly across the wench's underboobs, then her cleavage, before landing the third stroke across both the wench's perky nipples. The pain shot through her body like an electric shock, her elbows and knees tingling from the sensation of having thousands of needles pressed into her from every

direction. Immediately, her nipples began to swell, throbbing and puffy.

As the wench threw back her head and sang a clear note of anguish, she had an ecstatic vision. She saw herself, being safely led to the lap of the Lady of Lashes, by her own daughter, before being bent over and spanked forever and ever. Drooling, the wench offered up a private prayer of thanks, asking for the courage she needed to persevere. As the pain reached its climax, the pain itself lost its sting, and became pleasure. There would be times the wench would fall again into the depths of despair and doubt. But at that moment, she thanked her Goddess from the bottom of her heart for creating her to be a spanking wench.

She knew she belonged to the halflings, as their property. That she was nothing more than their very own, Mama's Little Girl. And at that moment, there was nothing more in all the world she wanted to be.

***

John Wilkes sat before his laptop, typing, muttering, deleting, and retyping his closing thoughts, over and over again.

"Note from John Wilkes: After the explosive response and positive feedback I've received for my initial research into provincial halfling ceremonial practices, I'm pleased to announce that Lady Mother Bridget Füdlewhopper has generously agreed to permit more recorded sessions of their religious services, in the hopes that it will encourage the next generation to appreciate the value of religion, and to honor the Lady of Love, the Lady of Laughter, and the Lady of Lashes. We are both thankful, and indebted to the First Temple of the halfling Quarter, Metropolitan District #1324. As ever, John Wilkes' "Booth": The Blog For Religious Revival, is honored to be on the frontlines of religious anthropology, and defending wholesome, traditional family values."

In the corner of his screen, he had his video editing software open to the point where he had spanked the wench himself, and was arguing whether the general public needed to see the unedited footage. Remembering his strict upbringing in the Temple of Chastity, Wilkes tapped a key to cut the damning clip. Then his fingers faltered, and he tapped undo, restoring it.

"Of course, as a Cleric of the Temple of Chastity, I do not endorse the...suggestive nature of the rituals depicted in this footage. Furthermore, the official catechism of the Church makes clear that all forms of slavery, even legal, voluntary slavery, are not endorsed by the Lord of Justice and Purity, although Church doctrine also makes allowance for the needs of other cultures and faiths which institute such practices. I am assured by the representatives of the halfling Temple that all wenches must voluntarily submit to their condition of...indentured servitude."

Rubbing his bleary eyes, Wilkes decided he ought to say something scholarly. After all, that was what his eager readers expected. But he also had so many other thoughts to share. “My investigation is primarily focused on the halfling temple’s practices for anthropological purposes. Nevertheless, I cannot help but reflect on the incredible nature of these practices, having now participated, personally...”

By now, the footage on his editing software had progressed to the scene when he’d given the wench her second spanking.

“The nameless....wench, now granted the informal title of ‘Little Mama’s Girl’ possessed a forceful and spirited personality. I suppose only a very determined person could endure such a life, and by her own choosing. But I must admit, however harsh her treatment must seem, I found myself thinking she deserved it. Yet the halflings themselves appear to be utterly unconcerned with matters of sin and

punishment. By far, the element of deliberate humor and community storytelling in the halfling religious service was most surprising to me…"

He reflected on Kornblume and Sister Kolhändler's contrasting approaches, fast forwarding past their moments in the recording to refresh his memory.

"Young and old, halflings continue to participate in their religious life…enthusiastically. Whatever our religious disagreements with one another, I must admit their commitment to encouraging youth engagement is worthy of…imitation?"

John Wilkes deleted the word "imitation" and replaced it with "consideration." No sense committing himself publicly to a position just yet, not when he was already nervous about the Temple of Chastity's High Inquisitor reading his blog.

Then Wilkes reflected on the love poetry of Lothario Lovefoot, and the battle between Willendorf and the three bratty halfling women. He

wondered if Lothario had confessed his love to Willendorf, and was now happily spanking the love of his life. “Possible, but not likely,” muttered Wilkes.

Then he wondered if the three spoiled, rotten halfling women were, even now, attending “Spanking Bootcamp,” to be trained for their new lives as wonderly chaste and terribly chastened young ladies. “Probable...almost definitely!” Wilkes smiled and began to type.

“The sheer variation of the prayers is in need of further study. halfling Spanking Poetry has long been noted for its clever turn-of-phrase and...unashamed use of innuendo by secular scholars [Note: find a citation for this point later]. Yet my findings also reveal that halfling parents are not afraid to employ more traditional forms of corporal punishment in domestic settings, though perhaps only in extreme circumstances. The stereotype that halflings never spank their children,

but always spank elf maids, may have begun with a grain of truth, but it is clearly a myth. Rather, we learned that halflings sharply distinguish the matter of corporal punishment, as a tool for child rearing, from their practice of flogging spanking wenches, treating the former as a serious matter, and the latter as...a joke."

Finally, Wilkes skipped to the end, to find the footage of Nelnēae furiously beating her own mother. At the memory of how the young kuukeiju had teased him throughout the service, Wilkes found himself wishing that she might volunteer for service as a spanking wench herself, by her own free will of course. "I'd like to see her on the other end of a spanking..."

Wilkes choked at this thought, and immediately intoned a prayer of repentance for lustful thoughts. Satisfied, he considered the subsequent scene, when Nelnēae embraced her mother, the former matriarch of the Megwandir Clan, forgave her, and

accidentally gave the wench her new title of "honor."

"Given the reputation this blog has earned in conservative theological circles, I am certain that this research will prompt...debate amongst my followers. That is a debate worth having. But let me also say that, no matter my personal reservations, I am deeply thankful to Lady Nelnēae for reminding me of the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation."

Wilkes shook his head as he looked at the hours of unedited footage he still had, and decided editing the first half of the morning service would be more than enough for a day's work. His more scholarly examination of the halfling temple practice was already done. All that was left...was the raw footage. Wilkes' hand hovered over the mouse, hesitating before clicking "Publish."

Just the news that John Wilkes intended to interview the obscure halfling cult had already sent

waves across the conservative High Church blogosphere. What if the High Inquisitor brought this blog to the attention of the High Pontiff of the Temple of Chastity and Justice himself?

John swallowed as he rewatched the footage of himself enthusiastically spanking the temple wench, for the thousandth time. “Fuck it.”

John Wilkes clicked “Publish,” and closed his laptop. It was time for a rest.

The End

Always Tip Your Vampire

By Yu May and JezebethNoir

Ninian Graf groaned as she thumbed the pages of her textbook, *An Introduction to Cryptodemonology*. As a half-nymph, Ninian could never look not beautiful, even when it was obvious she had been up all night and her snow-white hair was a hot mess. Ninian adjusted her Clark-Kent-style glasses and tried to focus on the paragraph in front of her, which she must have reread three times by now.

"Clerical errors while scripting Holy Code for proper anti-daemonware security measures can result in cyber-demonic possession, and even death. By corrupting an operating system, the cyber-demon can use the victim's screen as a Black Mirror, allowing them to transform the reality of the victim into a perpetual state of half-nightmare. Statistics consistently show that precisely 66.66% of terminal cases of doom-scrolling are directly caused

by cyber-demonic activity. It is therefore the noble obligation of the Clerical Coder to master the principles which guide the Celestial# Holy Coding Language."

Ninian's concentration was broken when she heard her neighbors through the thin walls. Either they were still practicing a mock virtual-battle with a beast with two heads for Paladin P.E., or they were taking a break to summon a beast with two backs. Even when things quieted down at campus for midterm week, studying the arcane liberal arts was always a noisy endeavour.

Ninian craned her neck to peek out the window, and behind the skyline she could just make out a pale crescent moon surrounded by misty, navy-blue clouds. Perfect! She'd already skipped lunch to study, and it was already dusk.

Groaning, she pressed against her eyes. For a seminal text on the magical art of protecting souls from cyber-demons crawling out of the darknet to

hunt for prey on the mortal plane, her schoolbook made for surprisingly dull reading. In desperation, she stuffed a comic book between the pages of her textbook, *Smokin' Hot Demon Spankers #101*, and reread it for the thousandth time. She'd learned the trick of hiding a comic book in her textbook from her dad's stories about surviving Wizardry West State College, but Ninian never actually used it to read forbidden material in class. She just liked to pretend she was actually reading her textbook.

As her stomach growled, Ninian pouted, glancing at the old pizza box that held the crusty, crumby remains of last week's survival rations. Nothing edible. As she closed the box, she examined the cartoony art of the heroic band of Anti-Vampiric Crusaders who decorated every box of Hella' Holy Pizza. The restaurant chain was owned by a wealthy family with religious devotion to Tyr. Every box proudly proclaimed their company mission: "To Deliver Pizza on Earth, and Goodwill Towards Demi-men!"™

Ninian sighed. When she was a kid, the cartoons and comics always made it seem like fighting demons would be a life of constant adventure: making best friends forever, forming hilariously stupid love triangles, and spanking an assortment of colorful, evil creatures into submission with various holy implements. But the reality of earning a Bachelor's Degree in Anti-Demonology fell far short of her childhood dreams.

She turned the page of her comic to the climactic battle where the Smokin' Hot Demon Spankers pounced on the harem of virtual succubi, moments before the voluptuous fiends could entice a hapless netstalker into trading his immortal soul for the chance to "Slay them with his mighty sword." The comic ended with the rag-tag group of heroes merrily slaying the virtual succubi with their mighty swords, for free!

Ninian rubbed her temples. Why, oh why, had she wasted so much time getting wasted at the

Bacchanalian Fraternity of Satyrs' drinking parties? Well, she sort of knew why. As she started freshman year, Ninian wanted to concentrate on her studies, but her roommate had insisted the frat parties were the best place to meet cute boys. In between playing various party games with names that are unmentionable in polite society, Ninian had gotten plastered and agreed to play a strip-tease game.

Normally, Ninian was extremely careful not to dress immodestly. As a child, her mom had warned her that a nude nymph could accidentally kill someone with her dazzling beauty, or at least drive men mad with lust. Ninian wasn't sure if it worked the same way for half-nymphs, or whether Mom had been stretching the truth, but Ninian had never dared to take the risk of testing the idea before. It had taken over three drinks for her to listen to the Satyrs' suggestion that Ale Pong is way more fun when you play it butt-naked. Whether or not Ninian really could kill a man with a single

wardrobe malfunction, the Satyrs didn't seem to mind her nudity.

After that, most of the night was a blur, but she clearly remembered her Mom and Dad coming to find her while she was crouching naked to puke into a toilet. They'd caught her red-handed and bare-butted. Already furious about her slipping GPA, Mom and Dad had announced for the entire world to hear that Ninian had a long, hard, bare-bottom spanking coming as soon as they got home.

With a furtive glance back at her buttocks, Ninian held it gently. She didn't have to be a Divination Studies major to know that if she bombed next week's midterm exam, there would likely be a round two of parental spanking in her future. And when your dad is a Wizard of the Avalonian Online School and your mom is an eternally beautiful Nymph of the Department of Forests and

Recreation, you do not want to piss them off enough to resort to corporal punishment.

After the nudist drinking-party incident, Dad had enchanted a series of rods, each with a different spell of chastening, to administer Ninian's very first caning. He'd only used the first cane, which was augmented by a simple heat spell, and promised her the rest would be even worse.

Ninian wasn't sure how it was physically possible to top having her buttocks scorched by invisible flames with every blistering stroke of the cane ("Six of the best instructors," in Dad's words). Sure, Dad had carefully crafted the cane with healing magic to make it incapable of doing any permanent damage, but from her butt's perspective, that just made the prospect of another caning much, much worse.

Just like how second-degree burns hurt more than third-degree burns, a magical caning could last much longer than a regular, old-fashioned caning, and the bottom never numbed to the stinging.

In contrast to Dad's more technical approach, Mom had simply hauled Ninian to the local state park, which doubled as her ancient grove. After procuring a bundle of stinging nettles, Mom had gifted them with eternal vitality so that they would never wither. Just brushing stinging nettles against bare skin was enough to instantly produce a stinging sensation, akin to a thousand small wasp stings.

But after Mom had spent ten minutes whipping the nettles across Ninian's bare ass, Ninian had been reduced to a sobbing mess and left with an angry red rash that burned continually. In fact, the nagging rash had stuck with her for over a month, right up until the day Ninian had finally nailed her retake on her last exam, only for the rash to instantly vanish the moment she'd turned her work in for grading. Ninian's mother had a real knack for finding enchanted trees and plant life, excellent resources for making both healing herbs and tools of chastisement.

Both the rods and the bundle of stinging nettles were now displayed prominently on her dorm-room wall, with an inspirational quote: *Vincit Qui Se Vincit*. A not-too-subtle reminder that if Ninian failed to discipline herself, her parents were more than happy to help her. A fraternity paddle hung underneath the display, sent by the Satyr frat boys as a form of apology. It bore the traditional Greek letters for the Satyr Fraternity: sigma, epsilon, and chi: "ΣΕΧ."

Ninian closed her textbook and stared vacantly at the empty half of the dorm room. She'd been so excited to get to room with her bestest-friend-forever from high school: Tituba "Titty" MacEndoor. Titty was the mirror-opposite of Ninian in appearance: while Ninian was tall and slender, a snowy-haired Sylvian geek, Titty was of average height and curvy, a raven-haired Cyber-Goth punk. But their shared interest in comics had brought them together at Holy of Holies High School.

But to Ninian's disappointment, Titty had gone into Feminist Arts and Witchcrafts Studies, which was considered the program for mediocre students who couldn't cut it for the Alchemistry department. They had almost no classes together, nor overlap in their academic interests...but it had still been nice to have a familiar face around.

Titty had spent most of her evenings playing HexBox666, complaining constantly of how her Holy Cleric parents had spanked her for hexing her school teachers while she was growing up. And after months of ignoring Ninian's gentle nudges about doing her homework and getting a good night's sleep, Titty had finally flunked out.

Ninian felt her palms sweating as she examined Titty's empty bed. When Titty's parents had arrived, they'd politely but firmly asked Ninian to leave the room so they could have a private word with their daughter. Her curiosity piqued, Ninian had surreptitiously started recording on her desktop

webcam before exiting the room. It wasn't that Ninian knew what was going to happen and wanted to immortalize it. It was only that she was a bit annoyed with Titty that day...and eager to see exactly what kind of scolding Titty had in store for her.

And sure enough, the moment Ninian had left the room, she overheard the tell-tale sounds of parental lecturing before Titty escalated it to a furious argument... Ninian had lingered by the door until she finally heard it: Titty's roars of protest, followed by the unmistakable sound of crisp *slaps* as something hard smacked against plump, meaty flesh, followed by Titty's howls of agony.

Ninian had stood immobilized by the door. The steady *Clap! Clap! Clap!* had carried on relentlessly, contrasting with Titty's wild cries and erratic pleading. On and on and on it went, until every last trace of sass and defiance was long gone from Titty's broken voice.

When the MacEndoors emerged from the dorm room, Titty's face was stained with running mascara, and she winced with every step as she carried her things in a cardboard box. Mr. and Mrs. MacEndoor had apologized to Ninian on behalf of their daughter for any distraction she may have caused her this year, and Titty had stuttered and stammered her way through a stumbling apology of her own.

Then they had led a downcast, whimpering Titty to the minivan, covered with bumper stickers advertising the Church of Justice and Mercy ("Honk if You Love Tyr!"). The last Ninian had seen of Titty was her dissolving into soft weeping in the back seat before she was driven away, and back to her new life, the same as her old life, still under her parents' sacred authority.

When Ninian had raced to check her recording, she was both pleased and horrified to discover she'd captured everything. Ninian had felt like a heel

while watching the footage of her best friend getting the spanking of her life, bare-butt and all, but Ninian watched the video over and over again, with a strange sense that if she wasn't careful, she would be next. *There, but for the grace of the Gods, go I.*

Ninian had crept onto Titty's SpaceBook page, offering support and sympathy, but also eager for more tidbits. Titty was now working as a delivery girl for a Hella' Holy Pizza joint.

...And Ninian couldn't help but notice how Titty had recently deleted her long internet history of screeds complaining about religious fundamentalist parenting styles and the problematic history of the Paladins of Tyr.

Ninian suspected she knew the reason for Titty's change of attitude in online discourse: the illicitly recorded video had made it clear that Titty's spanking at the dorm was only the beginning. Ninian was sure that, since flunking from Feminist

Arts and Witchcrafts Studies, Titty had started a new chapter in life: the life of a well-behaved, obedient church girl, in a pious household which honored the teachings of Tyr, including the use of corporal punishment as a tool of discipline to guide wayward children.

With a nervous glance at the door, Ninian made her way over to Titty's former bunk bed and lay on her stomach across it, precisely as she had watched Titty lie across it in the video. Shivering, Ninian bared her own buttocks, stroked them with both hands, then delivered a series of love-taps to her own butt-cheeks, lecturing herself furiously. "Quit procrastinating! Do your assignments! Do you want to end up stuck working a dead-end job in a fast-food joint forever? Then apply yourself!"

Having grown up in a fervently Lawful-Good religious family, Ninian was rather naive when it came to the kinky side of punishment and discipline. For Ninian, spanking was simply a fitting

punishment for naughty little nymphs like herself who procrastinated on their homework, or a gentle form of motivation to encourage her to be the best she could be.

Yes... thought Ninian as she stroked her buttocks. *...This is just a way to self-discipline, nothing else.*

Although she didn't have the heart to spank herself very hard, the sound of the spanking was still real enough for it to help her subconsciously slip into a vivid daydream.

After she finished "spanking" herself for her lack of effort in school, Ninian quickly fixed her clothing and returned to her desk. She had to be careful. If an R.A. ever walked in on her spanking herself and caught a glimpse of her naked buttocks, she shuddered to think what could happen.

Ninian wasn't sure if her being a half-nymph would lessen the effect, or if being seen in a state of semi-nudity was enough to instantly one-hit-kill

someone unfortunate enough to catch a quick peep of her posterior, but she preferred not to find out.

Ninian tensed when she heard a *thump* against the window. "Huh, must have been a bird or something. I'm over a hundred stories up. Nothing else could reach me up here."

As she sat back at her desk, Ninian felt her stomach churning. "I am not gonna end up working as a pizza delivery girl for the rest of my life."

Then her tummy rumbled. "Hey, wait a minute...where's my pizza?"

She glanced at the clock on her iMirror, then furiously checked her search history. Sure enough, the order had gone through.

With a look on her face that revealed her pure, unbridled "hanger," Ninian called the number for Garlic Gravestone's Pizza Delivery. She usually went for Hella' Holy's Paladin Pizza Pie, but The Garlic

Gravestone started advertising a five-copper-coin pizza deal, and Ninian was a poor college student.

"Yeah, this is Ninian Graf. I have an order for a large, gluten-free, vegan pizza special? My estimated delivery was over an hour ago?"

There was a pause before an automated voice answered. "...Thank you for calling. You've reached our Mechanical-automaton Customer Service Center. Your call is important to us."

Ninian snarled. "Ugh! Connect me to a person!"

"...If your language preference is for 'The Common Tongue,' please press 1."

Ninian rolled her eyes. "I shouldn't have to press 1 for Common! Where's my bloody pizza?"

There was another sharp *thump*, and Ninian jumped. In her peripheral vision she was sure she saw a dark shape slamming against the window, but as she turned she only saw a pale hand rapping at

the window. A dusky female voice hollered from behind the window. “Hey! Pizza delivery! Lemme in, quick!”

Ninian tugged at her ear. The voice was strangely familiar, but she was too annoyed about the delay. “Finally! What took you so long? Don’t expect a big…Titty?”

The moment that Ninian recognized Titty, something else occurred to her: she lived on the hundredth floor of a dormitory skyscraper. Ninian slammed open the window. “Titty! What are you doing out there? Get in, quick, before—”

A black-winged bat smacked against Ninian’s face, and she screeched as only a nymphish girl can screech at the sight of something fanged and hairy. “*Squeeeaaaaaah-haaiiiiiieeeeee!*”

There was a sharp *pop*, and the bat transformed into a busty young woman with pale skin and black hair, wearing nothing but a red cap and apron decorated

with the logo of The Garlic Gravestone Pizzeria. Without looking at Ninian, the woman bent over and rifled through her pizza-delivery duffel bag. "Phew, that was close! Anyway, got an order for one large, gluten-free, vegan pizza special, with a side of...ugh...garlic bread?"

Ninian caught a full-moon glimpse of the delivery girl's buttocks as she lifted herself off the floor and spun around, holding a cardboard pizza box in the shape of a coffin.

Below the logo, a trademarked slogan, "Am I Late? Punish Me!"™ was stamped in white block letters. Then Ninian finally tore her eyes away from the delivery girl's massive bosoms and finally recognized her as Titty.

Titty beamed, her eyes closed as she held up the morbid pizza box, before she finally opened her eyes and did a double take. "Garlic Gravestone Pizza! Either it's on time, or you can take it out on my...Ninian? What are you doing here?"

Ninian's mouth was agape. "Tituba? What are you doing here? Are your parents letting you come back to school?"

"Huh? Oh, no, I've moved out of their basement. I'm finally adulting!"

"What in Tyr's name are you wearing?"

Suddenly looking sheepish, Titty glanced at her bare backside, which was covered in soft, pink handprint marks. As Titty smiled nervously, her teeth looked strangely sharp. "Oh, this? Official uniform of Garlic Gravestone Pizza. Pay's a bit better than Hella' Holy. So, what's new? Did your butt ever recover from that blistering you got for bombing your first Holy Coding exam?"

Blushing, Ninian covered her backside. "Ugh! Do you always have to tease me about how I still get...wait a minute! What do you mean what's new with me? There was a bat, and you were hanging outside my window, and...and..."

Ninian examined Titty again, and then it hit her all at once. Titty's pale skin, the mysterious appearance and disappearance of the bat, the coffin-shaped pizza, and Titty's prominent, pointed canines. Ninian's pupils shrank, and then she screamed and pulled out her necklace which bore the sword and shield of Tyr. "Aaaagh! You're a vampire! Stay back, undead fiend!"

Titty rolled her eyes. "Ugh, don't tell me you still believe that superstitious, patriarchal, religious propaganda! Holy symbols only work on, like, Arch-vampires. You know, the kind who've sold their soul to a demon or devil or something? I'm way cooler than those dorks...I'm a vampire thrall!"

Ninian cowered behind the symbol of her faith, her hand trembling. "Titty? Did some monster do this to you? We've got to get you to a hospital! They can cure you!"

Titty blew a raspberry. "Pfft! I don't want to be cured. Being a vampire is great! I've got

super-strength, I can fly, I'm basically an immortal superhero now!"

Ninian peeped from behind her hand, and as she frowned she suddenly stopped shivering.
"Titty...what did you do?"

Titty's eyes popped open. "Uh...got a new pizza-delivery gig? The initiation ritual was really something! See, we're big on hiring out of marginalized-magical-monster communities. Ya know, vampires, werewolves, zombies, gorgons, banshees, harpies, nagini. I didn't wanna feel left out, so I figured—"

"You let a vampire bite you? Titty, vampirism is illegal! And how did you even get in here? Vampires aren't allowed to enter people's homes without an invitation."

Titty held up a finger. "Ah, about that...you kind of gave me permission when you signed the terms and conditions on the app. You did read those carefully,

didn't you? And technically, it's only a felony to pass the vampiric curse along to someone deliberately, but it's just considered a minor misdemeanour to be out in public while suffering from the symptoms of vampirism. Cops treat it like jaywalking. They usually give me a slap on the ass and tell me to get myself to a hospital soon. Pigs! Like, I'm not contagious, what's the big deal?"

"Pigs? What, you mean, like, orcs?"

"No! I mean fascist pigs, you know, like the police."

Ninian held her face, unsure if she was trapped in a nightmare. "Titty, that's disrespectful to our noble, duly-knighted Divine Law Enforcement Officers. Look, I don't know what those loons at that pizza joint did to you, but you clearly need help! Let's call your parents. Maybe they can—"

"No! I'm never talking to them again. You don't know what it's like, Ninian. They've gone crazy! They've been spanking me non-stop since I got

bounced out; put me under this whole draconian domestic-discipline system—Well...maybe I didn't mind the spankings so much, but they're just so mean to me—But now I'm free! And with my newfound immortality..."

Lightning cracked behind Titty, and as she held her pizza box up high, an organ seemed to play a Hellish melody. "I will serve the Cult of the Gravestone, and devote myself to our dark mission to trounce those Hella' Holy Paladin Pizza putzes! And once we've cornered the market on the urban fast-food delivery industry, we will topple this present dystopian system, returning us to an age of chaos and nightmare! Who knows? Maybe, after I've worked the night shift for another 500 years, I'll finally be able to afford a home! *Mwa ha ha ha ha!*"

Titty laughed maniacally, holding her hand against her mouth daintily, before pausing and holding out the pizza box. "Oh, that reminds me! Here's your pizza!"

Ninian's stomach growled; she blushed with embarrassment before her face turned beet-red with rage. "Huh...uh, oh I guess I should give you a tip for...hold on, you're over an hour late! You really expect me to pay for this pizza?"

As Titty batted her eyelashes, her eyes became strangely dark. "Oh, Ninian...can't you spare a nice tip...for an old friend?"

Automatically, Ninian reached for her purse. "Well...I guess we do go back...maybe..."

Ninian shook her head and grabbed her necklace. "Hold on! Was that some kind of dark, magical mind control?"

Titty smiled wide, her sharp fangs glistening. "Nothing so problematic. Merely the power of suggestion. I'm not the Titty you knew anymore, Ninny. I have ascended past the repressive systems of law and supposed goodness...aren't you tired of being stuck in this hamster wheel of a school

system, memorizing books so you can spend your life nitpicking code in an office for someone else? Don't you ever crave...adventure?"

Ninian dropped her symbol of Tyr as her eyes widened. "Yes...action...romance...fighting the forces of...evil?"

Ninian blinked, then held up her necklace again. "Hold on! I know what you're up to! You're trying to turn me! I'll never join you!"

As Titty shook her fist, she seemed to tower high above Ninian, almost reaching the ceiling. "I know you better than you know yourself, Ninny! Your faith in Tyr is already weakening. Search your feelings; you know this to be true!"

Ninian shook her head. "Foul temptress! The light of divine justice and mercy guides my every step!"

Titty licked her lips. "Does it? And what of the frat party? Did Tyr guide your steps when you debased yourself before those lascivious satyrs?"

As she felt a migraine coming on, Ninian clutched her head, wincing. “That...that wasn’t Tyr’s fault. It was mine! That’s not the person I want to be!”

Titty pointed her index finger right against Ninian’s nose. “But that was you, Ninian! And that was the version of you I like best. Not the ‘goody-two-shoes’ version of you that your parents want you to be...but the version of you I used to read comic books with, the kind of comics we had to hide from our parents...Don’t you remember how we both wanted to be Smokin’ Hot Demon Spankers when we grew up?”

Titty snapped her fingers, and suddenly Ninian found herself dressed in an absurdly skimpy, leather, dominatrix-style super-hero outfit, right out of the comic books. Ninian blushed and backed away from Titty as she covered herself. “Titty! Stop this! You know I’m uncomfortable being exposed in public.”

Smiling softly, Titty strutted after Ninian, her bare hips swaying with each step. “Then maybe it’s time for you to get comfortable, Ninny…You remember how it was in high school…You know you could never say no to me…”

As Ninian stared into the dark pools of Titty’s eyes, she seemed to lose herself in their infinite depths. Of course! There were times she found the whole Code of Tyr to be dull and hopelessly disconnected from the modern world. It really was her dream to travel the world in a skimpy outfit, smiting her enemies as an adventurer with the Smokin’ Hot Demon Spankers…

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And then Ninian remembered sitting on her father’s lap, with a sore bottom, as he comforted her. She had sobbed onto his shoulder. “I’m sorry, Daddy! I’m sorry! I’m a bad follower of Tyr! I’ll do better! I’ll never sin again! If you want, I’ll become a Cleric! Just don’t hate me!”

Dad had patted her on the back. “Oh, honey. Your mother and I don’t want you to follow Tyr because we believe in Tyr. We want you to follow Tyr because *you* believe in Tyr.”

Ninian had sniffled, glancing back from her dad to her mom. “Huh?”

Mom had rested a hand on Ninian’s shoulder, smiling so beautifully it was transcendent. “Tyr teaches us to stand up for truth and justice. To stand against evil, and defend the defenseless. But he also teaches us to show mercy to our enemies, and to show forgiveness to the repentant. We don’t want you to become a Cleric of Tyr out of a sense of obligation to us. Do you not want to become a Cleric of Tyr anymore?”

“I...I do! I really, really do! As a Cleric, there are so many ways I can help people! That’s the person I want to be!”

Dad had patted her bottom. “And what happened at the party? Is that who you want to be?”

Ninian had hung her head. “No! That was all Titty’s idea! I hated myself the whole time I was doing it!”

Mom had waved a finger. “Don’t you mind what Titty says. Whatever the reason, you still chose to go to that party. And repenting is not about hating yourself. If you want to follow Tyr, then remember that he loves you.”

Dad had patted her shoulder. “That’s right. And if you believe that Tyr loves you, then that means you should love yourself, just as he loves you. If you really want to be a courageous champion of the oppressed, the first step is to have the courage to say ‘No’ to anyone who tells you to do something that you know is wrong…even if it’s me, or your mom.”

“What? But…don’t I have to obey my father and mother?”

Mom had stroked her cheek. “Of course you should, because we love you. But if I ever tell you to do something you think is wrong, I hope you tell me to go cut a switch so your Dad can spank me with it...politely and with all due respect, of course.”

“So, to stand up for what’s right...I have to stand up for myself?”

Dad had patted her on the head lovingly. “That’s exactly right, cabbage...”

Ninian had sniffled and sank into her parents’ loving embrace. “Oh, Mommy...Daddy...”

Her mother had kissed her on the cheek. “...Now, follow me to the grove. We’re going to cut a switch, and finish your spanking!”

Ninian had stiffened. “Huh? But Dad already spanked me!”

But Dad had only looked at her firmly before patting her bottom again. “I punished you for putting yourself in a dangerous situation at that skeezy party. Your mother still has to deal with you for letting your grades slip. Now, this is important...do you agree you deserve a spanking?”

Ninian had nodded furiously. “Yes, sir. I’ll accept my punishment. But not because I’m afraid of getting another spanking...I want to obey...because I think it’s the right thing to do! Just like the Smokin’ Hot Demon Spankers!”

Dad had blinked. “Uh, is that a new adventuring party?”

Mother had cooed and pinched Ninian’s cheek. “That’s my girl! ...Ooo, maybe I’ll try using *urtica dioica* as a spanking implement this time! You won’t sit comfortably for a month!”

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With a mighty battle cry, Ninian shook off the effects of Titty's vampiric enchantment, the holy symbol of Tyr she wore on her necklace glowing with radiant, holy light. Nevertheless, Ninian was still wearing the skimpy dominatrix outfit. Apparently Tyr didn't mind the costume. "Enough! My soul cannot be corrupted by thou, vile vamp! For I have pledged my soul to a righteous cause!"

Titty howled and shielded her eyes from the light. "Very well, slave of Tyr! If you won't listen to reason, then stay trapped in your small-minded world of black-and-white morality. For my part, I shall return to the ranks of my brethren in the Cult of the Gravestone. And once our occultic power waxes, like the full moon, all shall tremble before our might, and finally taste the sweet freedom of destruction...as well as our secret tomato-sauce recipe."

Ninian snapped her arm to point at Titty's nose. "Oh, no you don't, vampiric thrall! For you see,

when I downloaded the app, I read all the terms and conditions very carefully! If my pizza wasn't delivered on time, I get to spank the delivery girl. Three strokes per minute you were late, and you were over an hour-and-a-half late! So that's two-hundred-and-seventy strokes you've got coming!"

Titty glanced down at her boobs and suddenly remembered the slogan printed across her apron in big letters, and the lingering marks across her rosy-pink backside. Finally it was the vampire's turn to look nervous. "But—but, Ninny! I'm your friend! Surely you can give me a break? After all, once I'm late delivering one pizza, even if it's only by a minute, I have to stop and let the customer spank me...which puts me behind schedule for the next order, which means an even longer spanking from that customer...which puts me even further behind schedule—"

"You made your coffin-shaped bed, Titty. Now lie in it. I thought those Garlic Gravestone advertisements about spanking the delivery girls were just a joke at first, but now I'm seeing the sense in the policy. For the crime of delivering my pizza so late, thine buttocks shall pay the full price of failure! I demand justice!"

Titty shielded her backside with her free hand, her eyes imploring. "Oh, please, spare me! Sure, I don't mind the idea of getting spanked on a regular basis. That's what made this my dream job! But I've already been spanked so much for one day! And getting hundreds and hundreds of strokes for one late pizza? That's way too much for a spanking to be any fun, even for me! If you are a true follower of Tyr, then have mercy!"

Ninian put her fists on her hips, sticking out her magnificent chest. "All right, Titty. I can see your new boss is pretty hard on you. If this is how you want to live your life, I can't stop you. But I won't

let you push me around, nor demean my faith...nor hypnotize me with occultic sorcery. Just leave the pizza, and get out. Don't worry. I'm not gonna spank you. Tyr teaches us to show quarter to those who plead for mercy."

Titty pouted. "What? No tip? I live on tips!"

Ninian sighed and opened the door, gesturing to let Titty out. "A tip is a gift, to recognize good service. You don't deserve a tip, Titty."

Titty tossed the pizza box onto Ninian's work desk before she stuck her nose in the air and sashayed to the door. "Hmph! Skinflint. Don't worry about next time. We probably won't spit in your food."

At the last moment, Ninian grabbed Titty by the arm. "On second thought, Tyr also teaches us to smite the wicked."

Ninian reached around to undo the knot in the voluptuous vampire's apron strings, leaving it dangling loose from the front. Then Ninian tugged

Titty toward the sofa at the center of the dorm room. Titty blushed, the red in her cheeks contrasting sharply with her ghostly pale flesh. "Bweah? Please, Ninny! I've already been spanked so much, in just one day!"

"And yet, no more than you deserve. Kneel on the sofa, and bend over the back. Ass all the way up, head low to the ground. I want a clear target."

Titty swallowed as she was guided roughly into position, resting her weight on the palms of her hands against the floor. As she lifted her buttocks, she accidentally revealed a set of scars left by vampiric teeth on either of her butt cheeks. "Oof! ...Uh...*Bwa ha ha!* Very good, do-gooder! I knew I could seduce you to our side after all! Um...if you like spanking so much, there's a really killer B.D.S.M. scene in the projects. I could introduce you to some dark elves if you're into that female-domination type stuff?"

In answer, Ninian landed a single sharp *clap* across each of Titty's buttocks, then held her hand high. "Silence! I'll hear no more of thy temptations! If you do not wish to repent, I shall deliver the cleansing fire of justice. First, you will feel the burn of the stinging nettles, an ancient art passed down to me by my...mother?"

As Ninian raised her hand, her palm glowed with warm, soothing light, like a midsummer's day, and with a spring breeze a bundle of stinging nettles appeared in her gloved hand. Ninian glanced at her display on the wall and noticed her mother's stinging nettles right where she left them. "Huh? Sweet! I've never managed to pull that off before! Natural magical summoning has always been tricky for me, and it's so much worse in the big city...where was I? ...Oh, yes, have at thee, harlot!"

Ninian whipped the nettles across Titty's buttocks with enough force that it would have stung a bit all by itself, even before the thousands of sharp, toxic

hairs that covered the plants did their work. Titty smiled as she felt the initial impact, only for her eyes to start bugging as she discovered what it feels like to get a thousand micro-injections of the chemical histamine to the behind.
"*Fffwaaah-ha-haaaaaa!*"

Ninian delivered five more lashes with the nettles before pausing, giving her victim time to feel the full effects of the poison. "That's six lashes for two minutes of tardiness. Are you starting to regret your vile villainy, vampiric thrall?"

Titty twisted to flash a middle finger at her tormenter, nearly losing her balance. "Oh, fuck you—*hoo-ops!* You're so holier-than-thou! But you're just reinforcing the capitalistic system of oppression that helps to dehumanize the demi-human
communi—*teeeee?—Heeeeyaaaaaiiiiiiii!*"

Ninian delivered another six strokes and waited. Sure enough, Titty's initial shout of surprise

morphed into a bat-like squeal of agony.
"*Biiyaiiieeeeek! Oh, ho ho!*"

As she watched Titty squirm, Ninian considered her battle strategy. The strength of the nettles lay in their pure stinging quality, despite their lack of weight...but she also felt a small degree of sympathy for her old friend. After all, Ninian's parents might have spanked her, but they also believed a champion of Tyr must temper justice with mercy. Ninian sighed. "That should do for a warm-up. Are you at least sorry for trying to hypnotize me into joining your pizza-joint-based occultic network?"

Titty twisted to throw up another middle finger, using her other hand this time. "Bite my ass! I don't care what you, or anybody else, thinks of me!"

Ninian narrowed her eyes and strode around the couch to reach her work desk. "Oh, really? Let's put your resolve to the test. The best way to fight evil...is to expose it."

Ninian adjusted her laptop so that the webcam was pointed straight at Titty's face, and loaded the Harmony app, the preferred text and video chat platform for champions of law and goodness.

Titty's eyes popped open as she saw the mirror image of her face on the screen, and a recording symbol. "Ninny? What are you up to? There's nothing in the terms and conditions about this!"

"The terms and conditions say that you have to keep your bare ass in position until I'm finished with you...and we're not even a tenth of the way done."

Titty smirked. "I know your game, Ninny. You pretend to be a perfect little church girl, but you plan to save that recording for later...so you can enjoy it, in secret!"

Ninian strode back to the opposite side of the couch. "There's nothing secret about it. And I'm not just recording. I'm livestreaming. The sight of

your bare buttocks being thrashed shall serve as an edifying moral guide to all our classmates, reminding them of the painful price of perdition!"

Titty opened her mouth, then closed it, then opened it again. "...*Bwuh?*"

Then a storm of hearts, likes, skull emojis, and comments started flying across the screen, and Titty suddenly remembered. Of course, Ninian was the admin for the most popular online study group on campus! Even the jousting-team jocks used to beg her for an invite!

At that moment, Titty felt a fresh stroke of the stinging nettles and howled.
"*Buh—buh—Blaaaaaauugh!*"

Waiting about four seconds between each blow, Ninian aimed another set of six strokes across the center of Titty's plump bottom before changing her tactics. The sting of *urtica dioica* is felt most keenly with the first touch, and even though her

blessed Nettles of Stinginess were far sturdier than regular nettles, Ninian wanted to use them to their full effect...so she found new spots to aim for.

First, Ninian kept the same slow-but-steady rhythm for her next set of strokes, but tried aiming her arm back and forth in a smooth motion, covering the far sides of Titty's butt cheeks, first to the left, then to the right. Titty was still reeling from the rash left by the last set of six, only to feel a fresh sting rising along the sides of her wide, child-bearing hips. "*Kiiyaa! Kyah! Keeeyaaaaiiieeee!*"

The pauses were just long enough for Titty to feel both the lash and the rash, but not long enough for her to catch her breath, and certainly not long enough for her to start arguing. Titty couldn't do much beyond wail and squirm, but nevertheless she managed to hold herself in position resolutely.

Then Ninian aimed the next set of six strokes along Titty's upper thighs, landing each blow just before the last. The results left Titty with a fairly even,

reddish rash that covered the central region of her bottom, surrounded by mottled pink rash that covered the rest of her hindquarters and upper thighs. The gradual shift in color from red to pink to pale white couldn't have been more even if it was painted by a master.

Finally, as Ninian paused, Titty caught her breath. "Okay, okay! I get it! No more hypnotism, and no more delays in your pizza deliveries ever again! You have my word!"

"That was only thirty-six strokes, Titty. We're not a third of the way done yet...but at least we're over half-way done with the nettles."

"What? That can't be true! You're not counting them right."

Ninian held a hand to her heart, sending a jiggle through one of her perfect breasts. "As a champion of truth, I speak no lie! ...Truth be told, I also gave you a slap with my hand for your cheek, but that

doesn't count toward your total. The terms as written by your dark masters give me some leeway to deal with an obstinate vassal. Don't you see, Titty? The forces of evil promise you freedom, but deliver you nothing but suffering!"

Titty threw up two middle fingers, allowing her head to sink dangerously close to the carpet and forcing her ass to rise dangerously high toward the ceiling. "Aw, shaddup! Angels, fiends, both sides are basically doing the same shit if you think about it. At least my new friends don't bore me to death while they beat my ass!"

Ninian answered with another stroke of the nettles, right across both of Titty's lower buttocks. Thanks to Titty's struggling, she'd accidentally exposed the pale-white sit-spots, previously hidden underneath the puppy fat of her plump posterior before it was stretched taut by her new angle. Titty noticed immediately. "*Yeeooowwwiiiieeeee-hee-heeeeeek!*"

Titty quickly clawed at the back of the couch, struggling to keep from flopping forward onto her face while also trying to twist her buttocks to hide the sensitive spots from her tormenter, but she didn't act fast enough.

In fact, Ninian's timing couldn't have been better and Titty's timing couldn't have been worse.

The moment Titty bucked, then reared, to lift herself back up onto the sofa, Ninian landed the second stroke across Titty's sit-spots. This meant that as Titty arched her back, her plump lower butt-cheeks caught the full brunt of the nettles, practically biting into the toxic needles from above and below. Then Ninian ripped the nettles across her target as she followed through on her swing.

Titty's eyes popped, and as she howled she shot her head up so fast her red apron went flying up along with her. The red fabric flopped against her face, revealing her hefty, flopping breasts to the webcam. "*Bwaaaauuuufff-thooo!*"

Ninian paused, briefly looking sympathetic. “Oh, Titty! This won’t do. If you flail around like that, you might hurt yourself! We need to put you in a better position, so it’s easier to hold still.”

Titty spat out her apron, then tore it off her head, knocking off her red hat along with it. “Hold still, my ass! I don’t gotta do a word…you…say?”

As Titty twisted to glower at Ninian, the blaring artificial light seemed to illuminate Ninian’s head like a halo. Ninian’s eyes sparkled as if reflecting stars, and an angelic choir seemed to herald her words. “Now, Titty, you know you’ve been a bad pizza-delivery vampire girl. That’s why you’re getting spanked, and you’re going to get every stroke you agreed to when you signed this devilish employment contract. Now, stand up, get a good grip on the couch, and straighten your legs.”

Titty’s eyes shone as she took in the radiant half-nymph’s beauty. It was…unnatural. Strangest of all was the contrast between Ninian’s revealing

outfit and her apparent lack of concern for it. It was as if Ninian was so good she no longer felt any shame about her body. Completely enchanted, Titty didn't even notice as her feet touched the floor and her back arched to present her bottom as an inviting target. Titty's body obeyed of its own accord.

Then Ninian patted Titty's buttocks playfully. "That's more like it. I'd say you were a good girl, but we both know that's not true. You're hanging out with a bad crowd, Titty, and they're dragging you down to their level!"

Titty stiffened as she felt the love-taps, snapping out of her trance. "Huh? How did—"

Ninian aimed a third stroke across Titty's sit-spots. Titty screeched, digging her fingernails into the couch cushion, but as she spotted herself on screen for the livestream, Titty discovered to her horror that she couldn't let go. Ninian silently delivered the next set of strokes in a steady pattern. This time

she started at the very uppermost portions of Titty's meaty hindquarters and slowly traveled down, concentrating only on areas she hadn't already covered with an angry red rash. Titty wanted to shout every curse and profanity she could think of, but as she reflected on the image of herself on the screen and the stern face of Ninian behind her, Titty couldn't help but want to hold still.

By the time Ninian had delivered another twelve strokes, she had covered the entirety of Titty's bottom and upper thighs with the rash. Titty trembled but stayed in place, holding both her head and her bottom high. Ninian hummed as she examined her work. "Hmm, next I will cover your calves. Be careful not to kick."

Titty scrunched her face. "My...calves? What calves? I only have to drink cow's blood on Thursdays?"

Ninian's only response was to whip the nettles across the meaty muscles of Titty's calves. Titty

sucked down a breath but managed not to scream. To Titty's surprise, although the stinging rash had gotten much, much worse, it had somehow also gotten easier for her to endure it. Now that Titty had time to think about it, the sting was more agonizing in one way, but also less severe than a simple hand-spanking in another way. And then it hit Titty all at once: the sting was only skin-deep.

Ninian patted Titty's bottom to get her attention. "Only six strokes left to go...with the nettles anyway. Back up on the couch, and feet apart."

Titty pouted. "Ninny? Please, don't do this to me! It's not my fault I'm late! We get way more orders on weekends. There ain't nearly enough delivery girls to handle them, but management just doesn't care! The Garlic Gravestone thinks us getting spanked is good for our bottom line!"

"You knew the job was dangerous when you took it. It's your own fault for joining a batty vampire cult, so it is your fault you're late."

Titty's lip trembled. "But...but..."

"Butt up on the couch. Then spread your legs as wide as you possibly can."

Titty's mouth tightened as she noticed she was already starting to obey. "Huh? Why do you want me like this?"

Ninian pulled Titty's ankles to spread her legs even wider until she was practically doing the splits on the couch, then angled Titty's hips upward. "I missed a spot."

Titty hugged tight to the back of the couch, feeling a sudden chill. "Missed a spot? Which—"

Ninian whipped the stinging nettles down vertically, aiming for Titty's asshole. But the poisonous needles managed to catch most of the inside of Titty's butt crack as well. Titty screamed the last word of her sentence "—One!?!"

Ninian smiled brightly. “Oh, good idea, Titty. Count the last six lashes with the stinging nettles. Don’t lose track, or I’ll start over!”

Her eyes popping, her knees trembling, Titty gripped the couch, and when she felt the second stroke she bellowed. “*Twoooooooo!*”

Just as Titty began to feel the rash rising along the inside of her butt crack and across her anus, the third stroke landed. “*Threeeeeee-hee-heeeeeee!*”

Casually, Ninian folded the nettles on themselves and gripped them as if she were about to deliver a belting. This gave Ninian the added control she needed to aim one stroke each at the two pale spots below Titty’s asshole, first left, then right. Titty sucked in her breath and held it as she felt the rash crawling to cover every last inch of her nether regions.

Finally, Ninian aimed an upward vertical stroke, catching Titty just beneath the asshole. Titty

struggled to contain her last screech before it exploded out of her lungs. "*Yoooooo-hooooo! ...Ooooh! By Kanchelsis' bloody taint!*"

Ninian whistled as she strolled to hang up the stinging nettles. "Phew! That will do for the first part of your spanking. Good job keeping count, Titty. Now we're about a quarter of the way through!"

Titty whistled as she felt her rash start to throb before she did a double take. "There's...still more?"

Ninian collected her father's collection of magically enchanted Rods of Chastisement. "Yeah, approximately seventy-five percent more. I can see why you didn't go into alchemistry. You've no head for fractions. There are five of these canes, so I think I'll give you twenty of the best with each of them, to get an even hundred."

Clutching her buttocks with both hands, Titty shook her head wildly. “Nooooo! I can’t take any more!”

“Don’t sell yourself short. You took the nettles surprisingly well. Of course, they only scratch the surface. A cane has plenty more heft to it.”

“You’re mean! You think torturing me is going to prove how good you are? If you were truly a follower of Tyr, you’d protect innocent victims like me from our corrupt, sanguivoriphobic political system!”

Ninian tested the weight of the first cane with a practice swing, which left a thin trail of flickering flames following the arc of each motion. “Just curious, Titty, what exactly would have happened to me if you managed to hypnotize me into joining the ranks of The Cult of the Gravestone?”

Titty glanced down at her titties, then glanced back up at the ongoing livestream on Ninian’s laptop,

and suddenly realized she was still completely naked. "Um...we'd have fed you delicious, crematorium-baked pizza, made only with fresh, all-natural ingredients? Maybe offer you an entry-level job, with competitive rates?"

"And once you had me all fattened up...might one of your friends want to take a bite out of me?"

"Oh, no! We're big on consent! No one would have turned you into a vampire unless you renounced the path of righteousness of your own free will!"

"And suppose I didn't volunteer to work for The Garlic Gravestone? What would have happened to me then?"

"Um...do I have the right to remain silent?"

Ninian flicked the cane to point at Titty's face. "Verily! And you'd better start exercising it! I grow weary of listening to your petulant whining, thou blood-sucking knave! For your caning, I shall have you assume your first position again. Bow your

head in shame for your misdeeds, and lift your hinderparts high, as an offering for your penance!"

Titty scowled but nevertheless obeyed. "But...but I'm not sorry at all!"

Ninian tapped the cane against Titty's upturned buttocks. "And neither am I! But don't worry, you'll be sorry soon enough."

With a full stroke of her arm, Ninian struck the cane across Titty's already-reddened buttocks, and as healing red fire engulfed Titty's behind she discovered two things at once:

First, magical healing fire tingles like mad, but it's a pleasant, toasty-warm sort of feeling, like warming your butt by the fireplace on a cold winter day. It still hurts, of course, but only just beyond the point of tolerance.

Second, the cane stung almost as badly as the stinging nettles, but it also sank deep into her glutes, the whipping motion tracing a thin line

across both cheeks. Titty couldn't help but think of a hot knife slicing through butter, or in this case her buttery buttocks. Titty raised her head to roar but she kept her hands firmly placed on the floor. "*Yeeeooowwwoop!*"

Ninian silently carried out the first set of cane strokes, giving Titty about a nine-second pause between each to catch her breath. But as Titty found her second wind, it occurred to her that the slower pace was hardly merciful. In fact, it gave Titty just enough time to feel the sensation of each stroke, like a wave reaching its crest, before the next stroke landed. Titty bit her lip so sharply her vampiric fangs drew blood.

Finally, Titty roared at the laptop. "I will not break! ...*Yeow!* ...The pizza-delivery girls of The Garlic Gravestone are dauntless, and we are legion—*NOooow!* ...W-we are the vanguard of the new world! A world where the streets will be paved

red with blood, and/or sweet marinara sauce...*Yow! Owowow!*"

Ninian rolled her eyes as she delivered the last set of strokes with the flaming cane. "Are they paying you to say this?"

"They don't need to pay me! ...*Yikes!* I-I mean, sure, I could sure use a raise, but I'm not motivated by such greedy, capitalistic interests—*Yeee-yipe! ...Ack!* B-becoming a vampire was the b-best day of my life! ....*Aiieee-yeeek!* Dang, that smarts!"

Ninian silently counted the twelfth stroke before pausing. "There, I'd say the healing fire has brought your butt back from the brink of destruction. Now I can kick it up a notch."

Titty tossed her hair aside, looking smug. "Ha! Healing your enemy in the midst of a battle to the bitter end? Your naive notions of mercy will doom you, thou pathetic Paladin puppet!"

There was a rush of hot air as the entire cane erupted in fire before Ninian swung it like a sword across Titty's buttocks. With a squeal, Titty strained her legs, then pumped them wildly as if trying to swim away. "*Aaaaiiiii-cha-cha-chaaaah!* It burns!"

Titty yowled as she felt each of the next eight strokes and finally started shedding tears by the last one, which brought the total to twenty. "*Baaaw! Bwaaah, buuh-waaaaah!* No more, Ninny! This is assault and battery! I'm a helpless victim!"

Ninian set down the first cane, then scooped up the second. "Well, sucks to be you."

As Ninian tapped the second cane against Titty's behind, there was a flurry of snowflakes, and Titty felt a chill wind. "Eh? That actually feels kinda nice?"

Ninian swung the cane with precise force, adding follow-through, and Titty felt an icy frost cutting

deep into her flesh. "*Aaagh!* Not nice! Not nice at all!"

Ninian finished delivering the first three strokes before pausing to examine the cane. "Oh, sweet, Dad must have infused these with elemental magic. I'll have to ask him to teach me the trick to do that. I imagine this will have a slight numbing effect. Next time I'll have to try using this one first and the fire rod second. Tell me, how does it feel?"

Titty growled before the next stroke caught her off guard. "It feels bad! It fucking hurts, okay? ...*Oooow!* Oh, oh-ho no!"

"Don't use the f-word. It just shows everyone you have no class."

Titty winced, then started flipping the birds at the camera before another icy stroke caught her off guard. "I don't want class! The upper-class can kiss my—*aaasssss!*"

Ninian delivered another ten strokes before pausing to examine Titty's snow-frosted bottom. "Hmm, it's definitely numbing you. Plus, you'll need some healing fire to avoid frostbite. Dang. I wanted to have an even number of strokes for every cane, but I guess I shouldn't be too persnickety about the number. We'll cut off the spanking with the ice cane early. Just twelve with this one."

"Huh! Ugh, finally! You always were a tyrannical, O.C.D. freak about cleaning our room! Totally killed my vibe. Pretty selfish if you ask—"

Ninian caught Titty off guard by spanking her with the fiery cane again.

Titty squealed her favorite word. "—meeeeee!"

After eight cane strokes, the flames had successfully melted the ice, leaving Titty's bottom glistening wet and steaming. Ninian replaced her cane and examined the next in the set. "Hmm...Hephaestus, Boreas... Nice! Dad put divine sigils on all of these

so I can tell them apart. He's thoughtful like that...Ah, the sign of Zeus. I think I know what this one does, then."

Titty pointed a finger in the air, then lifted her head to plead with her oldest, dearest childhood friend. "Okay! It was a hard-fought battle, but you finally wore me down. I admit defeat! Now we can talk about the terms of my peaceful surrender!"

The moment that Titty raised her head, she saw Ninian winding up with the third cane before bringing it down with a *snap* of jagged, blinding light. Of course there was a cracking sound, as you'd expect from any cane stroke. But there was a sharper, almost buzzing quality to the crack.

As electricity coursed through her buttocks, sending the droplets of water sparking and flying, Titty jolted and felt a tingle travel through her entire body, her hair flying in every direction. It was only after a full second passed that she noticed she

couldn't move and realized she was being electrocuted.

Once, when Ninny and Titty were two years old, their fathers had ordered them not to stick their fingers in electrical sockets. So Titty had dared Ninny to stick her finger in an electrical socket along with her.

Ninian paused as she watched the last of the electricity dissipate around Titty's buttocks with a *snap*. "Oh, good idea, Titty. I wouldn't want you to kick me by mistake, otherwise I might accidentally get shocked by the electrical current. Don't worry, I won't give you any extras for leaving your first position."

"But—"

Ninian snapped the cane across Titty's buttocks before she could finish. This paralyzed Titty with another zap of lightning, so Titty didn't manage to finish her sentence until the 20th and final stroke.

"—I—don't—want—to—be—nice—I—want—to—be—an—agent—of—darkness—loyal—only—to—my—master!"

Ninian paused for an extra couple of seconds after delivering the 20th stroke before quickly pulling the lightning cane away. "Titty! I'm surprised at you. I thought you were a feminist. Don't tell me you've put yourself under the thumb of some vampire bad boy."

"Hey! Who said he was a man?"

"You just did!"

"Well, you shouldn't have assumed! And anyway, he's different! He's not like the other guys! He's exciting, and dreamy, and totally gets how we all live in a society, and deep-down I know that he's just misunderstood and needs someone to love him!"

"You used to call me a 'pick-me girl,' just 'cuz I once said I wanted to marry a knight in shining armor and be a mom one day."

Titty rolled her eyes and wagged her head. “Ugh, you’re so brainwashed! That’s just benevolent sexism! What are you, six years old?”

“When I told you that, I *was* six years old, and you’ve been teasing me for it ever since!”

“Just admit you want a wife-beater already!”

Ninian rolled her eyes and picked up the next cane. “See, this is Junior High Prom Night all over again. You always put words in my mouth! Of course I don’t want to marry a man who hits me. What do you think I am, some kind of sicko? ...Oh, by the way, this next cane was blessed by the power of Thor, God of Thunder. Better rest your head on the couch before I hit you with it. And cover your ears.”

Titty scowled as she assumed the correct position, then glanced skeptically over her shoulder. “Thunder? Wait, how’s that any different than the last—”

As Ninian struck the cane across Titty's buttocks, there was a literal thunderclap. The sound shook the room, sending Ninian's loose notes flying. If Titty hadn't lowered her head to rest on the back of the couch, she likely would have been sent flying across the room.

Ninian raised the cane high and bellowed a war cry. "*Fus ro dah!*"

The deafening sounds of the thunder cane were so loud even Titty's begging and pleading was drowned out. But after twelve strokes Titty dimly made out the sound of sharp knocking at the door. "—*Ow!* H-hey, Ninny?—*Yowch!* S-someone—*HAAAOOOW!* Someone's at the door!"

Ninian tugged at her ear. "What? Speak up!"

"Ninny! Wear headphones, dumbass!"

"What? I can't hear you! Look, next time I spank you with a cane powered by the might of Thor, God of Thunder, remind me to wear headphones!"

Titty signed the words, then pointed at the door. "Someone's at...the door...you dumbass!"

Ninian clapped Titty sharply across the behind with her open palm. Then she used sign language to answer. "No...swearing...or else..." Ninian signed the word for "spanking" and marched to the door.

As Ninian swung it open, she was greeted by a tall, handsome, square-jawed, broad-shouldered, barrel-chested young man in the Pre-Paladin program, along with a short, goat-legged satyr. The Paladin-in-training took one look at Ninian and immediately fainted dead away at the sight of a half-naked half-nymph.

The satyr caught his friend with surprising ease, then leered at Ninian. The satyr's voice was strangely reminiscent of the famed bard, Sir Danny

of Devito. “Could you keep it down? Some of us are trying to study! What are you two even doing in…oh, hey, Titty. I thought you got suspended. What’d you do? Seduce the Dean to let you back in?”

Still butt-naked, Titty glanced at the ongoing livestream and swallowed. “Um…”

The satyr shrugged. “Well, far be it from me to judge. Now, if you don’t mind, I’m gonna try to fulfill my boyhood dream to become a gynecologist…which means I need some peace and quiet…Ugh…And I gotta retake that Anti-Sexual Harassment Quiz.”

Glancing at the window, Titty slowly crept off the couch and started tiptoeing toward it.

Oblivious to what was going on behind her, Ninian stuck out her chest, smiling broadly. “Fear not, my good goat. We’re almost done. Tend to your friend. I fear he may require medical assistance.”

"Nah, he's just shy. Give Titty a good slap on the ass and tell her it's from me. Hey, while I have your attention, would you have any interest in joining a—"

Ninian slammed the door in the satyr's face, then turned to find Titty with her foot on the window sill. "Titty!"

Titty stiffened, then started pretending to stretch. "Ninny! I was just—uh, just stretching my calves on the windowsill. Isometric exercise. Care to join me?"

"Why are you out of your spanking position, Titty?"

In the blink of an eye, Titty zipped back to the couch. "What? Me? Disobey an order from you? Perish the thought!"

"Very well, my friend. I trust you implicitly. Therefore we may finish your spanking as I originally planned, without adding additional

strokes. However, it would be rude to disturb our neighbors. Hmm...I might have an idea. Let's hope I can make this work."

Ninian rifled through her desk and found a pair of earbuds. "Here, Titty. Dad's old noise-canceling headphones. You take one and I take one."

"Huh? These look so retro. What are these supposed to—"

Ninian put an earbud in her ear and tapped it. When Titty put hers in, all the ambient sound suddenly vanished.

Ninian fiddled with her earbud. "See, Titty? They're Noise-Canceling Headphones. As long as we're wearing them, we can't make any noise. But since we're sharing the same pair, we'll still hear each other just fine."

Titty blinked twice. "What?"

“Are you jerking my chain, or can you really not hear me? Because you’d better not be jerking my chain.”

“I can hear you! I can hear you!”

“So, are you jerking my chain?”

Titty shook her head. “No, ma’am!”

Ninian retrieved the final cane from the bundle of rods and whipped it experimentally. “Then don’t interrupt. This cane bears the mark of Helios…so this last caning’s going to be a bit rough for you. Knees on the floor, elbows on the couch. You’ll need a steady stance.”

Titty swallowed as she assumed the correct posture. “L-like this?”

Ninian scooped up her laptop and set it in front of Titty on the couch. “That’ll do. Here, let’s make sure our audience can see your face.”

Titty blinked as she saw the close-up of her face on the laptop, along with the comments flying by. Some were complaining that they wouldn't be able to see anything, but now the chat was starting to come alive as they realized they would have a front-row seat for the last part of the caning session. Titty saw comment after comment that echoed her own private fears:

"What's gonna happen next?"

"How could this possibly get any worse?"

"Isn't her pizza getting cold?"

Titty snapped out of her musings as she felt Ninian tapping the cane against her buttocks.

Shaking her head, Ninian stroked the cane along her target. "I want you to think hard about how you've been acting today. Do you have anything to say for yourself?"

"Um...it's not my fault? I'm a victim of circumstance?"

There was a blinding light as Ninian whipped the cane across Titty's buttocks. The cane shone with such radiance Titty had to shut her eyes tight, even despite facing the opposite way from the light source.

Titty flinched as she felt the impact of the cane, followed by a slow, agonizing burning. "*Eeep! ....Aaaaah-ha?*"

Titty glanced back and saw a vividly red welt rising along the point where the cane had impacted. As Titty felt it, she realized the rash left by the nettles had been agonizing, but more like an itch than a burn. But this...somehow it burned worse than fire, but without the same heat.

Then Titty glanced back and saw Ninian donning a pair of sunglasses, the cane shining like the sun from on high. And as Titty felt the second stroke of

the solar cane lancing across her hindquarters, she finally put two and two together: it wasn't a cane mark...it was a sunburn!

Ignoring Titty's howl, Ninian tossed a stray lock of hair out of her face. "Nope. Wrong answer. Try again."

Titty curled and uncurled her lips as she felt the third and fourth strokes start to stretch and burn. She had time to appreciate how the heat wasn't quite as bad as the earlier fire, but now there was no healing magic. And as a vampire thrall, Titty sunburned easily. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry!"

Ninian aimed the blinding third stroke of the cane at a downward diagonal angle. "For what? Be specific."

Titty batted her feet against the carpet and blinked, trying to make anything out in the blinding white light. "For the late pizza!"

Ninian aimed the fourth stroke at a similar diagonal angle before strolling to Titty's opposite side. "I'm not that angry about the pizza. Use your head, Titty."

Titty seethed and felt two tears spilling down her face. "I...I'm sorry for being rude to you!"

Ninian aimed the fifth and sixth strokes diagonally across the previous two sunburns, with almost no pause between them, to create a double-X pattern in red lines across her target. "That's better. What else did you do wrong?"

"I...I tried to manipulate you!"

Ninian delivered the seventh and eighth strokes at a more horizontal angle, leaving Titty with an even pattern of criss-crossing lines across her buttocks. "Exactly. I thought we were friends, Titty. How could you treat me that way?"

Titty bounced up and down on her knees as she felt the fresh sunburns. “I just wanted you to think I was cool!”

Ninian clicked her tongue. “Tsk, tsk. Do you feel cool right now, Titty?”

Titty forced herself to open her eyes a crack and could just make out her tear-stained face on the laptop screen. Her heavy black mascara was starting to run. “...*Noooooooo?*”

Ninian tapped the cane across Titty’s behind. “On your feet. Back straight. Hands behind your head.”

Blinking, Titty noticed her exposed breasts and pubic hair on full display on the laptop screen. She had shaved her bush to resemble an inverted pentagram. Ninian placed her left hand delicately on Titty’s belly and held her close to look her in the eyes. With her right hand, Ninian reached around and tapped Titty across the back of her upper thighs with the cane. “Anything else you want to

apologize for while you're still in a repentant mood?"

Titty swallowed. "Um, doesn't that cover pretty much everything?"

Without breaking eye contact, Ninian raised the cane and brought the ninth stroke down diagonally across Titty's thick thighs. "Aren't you a bit sorry for joining a vampiric cult?"

Titty stiffened but stood firm. "No! I'm not sorry!"

Ninian landed the tenth stroke just below the previous one. "What about you trying to hook me into joining?"

Titty grit her fangs. "*Eep!* ...In hindsight, I probably did ask a bit too much of you, right off the bat!"

Ninian slid behind Titty, gracefully switching the cane to her left hand as she circled to Titty's other side. "Don't you think your first decision to

become a vampire might have had an impact on the series of bad decisions you made tonight?"

Titty pouted. "Well sure, but that doesn't mean I have to apologize for it!"

Ninian landed the eleventh and twelfth strokes across the back of Titty's thighs, creating another double-X pattern. "So what you're saying is: you're sorry for trying to strong-arm me into joining your vampire pizza cult, but aren't at all sorry for joining the vampire pizza cult yourself in the first place?"

Titty scrunched her face, closing her eyes tight until the blinding sunlight faded. "Pretty much, yeah. It's my life!"

Ninian towered above her captive, glowering darkly, before she beamed sweetly. "Okay, Titty. I don't agree with your decision, but I respect that it's your decision to make. Now, let's wrap up this caning. Only eight strokes to go! Hold out your hands for

me, palms up...Hmm, don't want to sun-blind you by accident. Here, take my spare pair of sunglasses."

Ninian reached into her itty-bitty leather dominatrix thong and pulled out a comically large pair of sunglasses, which she pressed onto Titty's face.

Titty squinted with one eye as Ninian guided her hands down from behind her head. "Eh? You're not mad at me for—"

Ninian snapped the cane across both of Titty's upturned palms, using a precise flick of her wrist. "Tee hee! Oh, you know I can never stay mad at you for long, Titty. Now, stop clenching your fists, you silly thing. I don't want to bruise your fingers by mistake."

Ninian stroked her thumb across Titty's palms until Titty relaxed her hands and held them up again. "*Oooh, oooh, oooch!* B-but, if you're not m-mad, why do we have to keep—"

Ninian landed a second cane stroke across Titty's palms before flipping Titty's hands to show her knuckles. "We need to be thorough, Titty. I can't stand leaving a job half-done. Next up's the knuckle-cracker. Hey, remember all the times we got the ruler back at Holy of Holies Middle School? I miss those days!"

Titty seethed as she felt the sunburns sizzling across her palms. "Ugh! Why would I want to remember that? I hated getting my knuckles rapped!"

Smiling sweetly, Ninian rapped Titty across the knuckles on both her hands. "Me too! That's exactly what made it such a formative experience."

Titty's fingers twitched as she struggled to hold her hands in place. "It *was* a formative experience! The kind that sucks balls!"

Ninian pouted as she delivered the second stroke of the cane across Titty's knuckles. "Huh. Agree to

disagree. Palms up, Titty. I want to switch sides to even out the color."

"Ugh! Does everything you do have to be perfectly symmetrical all the time?"

Ninian shook her head as she switched the cane back to her right hand and almost danced to Titty's left side. "Not always. Sometimes I like using the golden ratio."

Titty grit her teeth and endured another set of four strokes, two on her palms, then two on her knuckles. By the end of the ordeal, Titty's hands were as red as her buttocks. Titty took a shaky breath, feeling tears returning to her eyes. In one way it was a relief to have something other than her buttocks be the target of Ninian's ire, but now the only thing distracting her from her aching buttocks was her burning hands and thighs. "Shit! How many more to go?"

Ninian sighed. “Well, that would have been it for the caning, but I already warned you about using foul language, so you just earned extras.”

“What? That’s not fair!”

“I know. I really should start your spanking over from the very beginning. But don’t worry, I think twelve strokes should suffice for your forgetfulness.”

Titty opened her mouth, then froze. If forgetfulness earned her eight strokes, Titty had a pretty good idea what deliberate disobedience would earn her. “...How do you want me?”

“Hands behind your head again. I think we’ll finish with six strokes across your tits, then six strokes across your thighs. Just obey all my commands, and we’ll get this over with more quickly.”

Titty glanced down nervously at her bare nipples, automatically raising her hands to interlace her fingers behind her head. “M-my titties?”

"Yes, Titty. Hold your head high, and stick out your chest. As long as you're brave, you have nothing to be ashamed of!"

Glancing at the livestream footage of her nude form, Titty took a deep breath and thrust her chest forward. Ninian aimed the first stroke of the cane precisely across both of Titty's nipples.

Titty howled, dancing in place briefly before straightening her posture. Though her vampiric curse gave her supernatural strength and endurance, the long spanking was slowly but surely wearing down her resolve. Titty stood firm as Ninian delivered the second and third stroke of the cane, aiming just above and just below Titty's nipples, covering most of the areola. Titty's whole body started to quiver. "Ninny! Please! I'll do anything! Just—"

There was a rush of cool wind, and suddenly Ninian disappeared in a swirl of leaves and flower petals before reappearing on Titty's opposite side.

Ninian glanced around the room before dancing with giddy, girlish glee. “Hee hee! Omigosh, Titty, did you see that? I’ve never managed to do that before! Mom keeps saying my Nymphish side is bound to come out eventually. You know, I think I’ve had an epiphany! Oh, tips up, Titty. Got another three to go from this angle.”

As she stiffened, Titty shook her head. “No, no, no! I’m sorry! I’m so—”

Ninian aimed the next cane stroke across Titty’s breasts, and after pausing for a few seconds landed number two and three just above and below her nipples. By the time the sixth and final stroke had landed across her boobs, Titty had started weeping freely. “*Nah-Nah-Niiiiinnn-neeeey! Am’sowwwreeeeeee!*”

As Titty felt her knees give out, there was another flurry of wind, and Ninian appeared at her side, helping her settle down into a kneeling position.

"Almost there, Titty. Three and three across your thighs. You can do it."

Titty rolled her head back and wailed, sobbing. "*Bwwaaaaah! Waaaah!*"

Ninian pressed her free hand against the small of Titty's back to support her weight before delivering three downward strokes of the cane across the front of Titty's fleshy thighs, each crisp blow producing a burst of sunlight. Titty's whole body shook, but as she felt a cooling forest breeze rushing around her she moaned and sank her weight back.

In a rush of autumn leaves, Ninian reappeared at Titty's side and whispered in her friend's ear. "Just three more, dear. Be a good girl."

But as Titty felt the next blow of the cane lancing across her thighs, she melted down. "I'm a bad girl! I'm bad, I'm bad, I'm bad! *Bwaaaaaah!*"

Ninian finished the third and final stroke and sighed with relief, brushing a stray leaf away from her hair. “That should do it. Up you get, Titty.”

Sobbing and heaving, Titty buried her face against Ninian’s chest. “I’m a bad friend! Please, don’t take me back to my parents! Punish me all you want, but not that! Anything but that!”

Ninian blinked before hugging Titty, patting the back of her shoulder. “Why, Titty! Of course I’m not going to force you to go back to your parents.”

Titty glanced up, her face still nestled between Ninian’s breasts. “Wuh? You’re not? But you’re both followers of Tyr! Don’t...don’t you want them to spank me until I become a follower of Tyr too?”

Ninian flashed a minxish, unmistakably fairy-like smile. “To be honest, I’m kind of thinking about switching my major to Druidic Ecology and becoming a champion of Demeter...or maybe I can multi-class? But I could never be so cruel to you! I’d

be happy if you chose to honor Tyr, but I can't force you to honor Tyr..."

Ninian spun around, clinging her friend tight to her chest. Then Ninian stroked her hand across Titty's cheek. "...And no matter how high my career takes me, I hope we can always be good friends."

Titty felt two fresh tears in her eyes. "Even...even though I'm a bad girl?"

Ninian reached with both hands to clap Titty's buttocks, which still glowed softly with radiant magical light from the caning. "Especially if you're a bad girl! Someone's got to keep your naughty botty in check!"

Titty glanced back and finally noticed the state of her buttocks. It looked like she had just sat on a waffle iron. Then Titty noticed the laptop and the endless stream of comments on the livestream.

"Guess I've got more spanking coming in my future, huh?"

Ninian giggled. "Tee hee! Well, duh! I still haven't given you your paddling! You've still got one hundred good, hard spanks coming!"

"My...paddling?" Titty's eyes darted to the wall mount, where she finally noticed the heavy wooden Satyr-fraternity paddle.

Titty grinned wide, her eyes fearful. "Nuh-now, Ninny...as a righteous, lawful champion of Tyr, you really don't have to enforce a vampiric contract! You could—you know—just let me go? Maybe I can send a message to the Cult of the Gravestone that they should never dare to challenge the forces of justice ever again?"

Ninian stroked her chin. "Hmm, you're right. I don't have to spank you just because that fiendish employment agreement you signed permits me to spank you...But then again..."

With a gleeful smile, Ninian's eyes narrowed. "...I've always thought you could benefit from a good spanking, Titty...ever since we were in kindergarten!"

Titty swallowed a lump in her throat, mesmerized by the dangerous beauty in the half-nymph's eyes. "Yes, ma'am...I will submit to you."

After setting up the laptop at the perfect angle, Ninian instructed Titty to stand behind the couch and bend over, butt toward the camera. Then Ninian retrieved the wooden paddle with a spritely skip in her step and patted it against Titty's plump buttocks. "Okay, legs straight. Arch your back...a little more. Get up on your tiptoes...Ah, perfect presentation! Such an inviting target..."

Just as Titty was mentally prepared for her torment to begin again, Ninian fixed her glasses and turned to face the livestream camera, in nerd mode. "Ooh, by the way, if you're ever going to give a paddling, make sure to have the victim—ah, I mean, the

participant—stand in a wide, steady stance. See, for a proper paddle stroke you've really got to put your whole body into the swing and let the laws of physics do their work! If the spankee doesn't have a solid, martial-arts-worthy stance, you could easily go—"

Ninian surprised Titty with the first ferocious stroke of the paddle, swinging it like a baseball player going for a home run. "*Pow!*—and send 'em right to the moon! Isn't that right, Titty?"

Titty hissed, too surprised to scream. But with an effort she held her position. "...Fascinating...I feel like I'm learning so much today..."

As Ninian wound up for the second paddle stroke, thorny vines began to crawl around it. "I should hope so! Now...let's talk about the environmental impact of those pizza boxes..."

As Ninian began to paddle Titty in earnest, the livestream chat erupted with emojis and superchat donations.

Titty yelped as she felt her meaty buttocks flattened like two pancakes, not to mention the prick of the pointed thorns. "*Yeowch!* Oh, come on! They're cardboard! It's recyclable!"

Ninian swung the paddle at a slightly upward angle, lifting her victim up slightly off her feet. "Nice try! You can't recycle pizza boxes. They're too greasy!"

Titty howled, then hissed as she fought to catch her breath. "*Yoooowl! Sssshh*...Sure! But they're still biodegradable!"

Ninian patted Titty's bottom with the paddle playfully. "Is that an excuse I hear?"

Titty shivered. "...No, ma'am!"

"Good! Then let's have no more arguments and finish your paddling. Wouldn't you agree?"

Titty obediently arched her back, presenting her bottom with perfect submission. “Yes, ma’am!”

With that, Ninian began the long, hard paddling. There was no more need for lecturing, and Titty gave a heroic display of keeping in position. This meant that Ninian was able to fall into a steady pattern as she delivered the first ninety strokes, sometimes playfully switching sides in a flurry of wind. With each *whack*, the hefty paddle pressed the raised welts from the caning flat while the thorny vines left behind a pattern of red-violet pricks, not quite deep enough to draw blood but enough to stand out from the earlier cane strokes.

Finally, Ninian paused. “All right, Titty, only ten paddle strokes to go, and you will have fully paid your debt for the late pizza delivery...I was taking it a tiny bit easy on you until now, but these will have to be the hardest ones yet. I want you to count each of the last ten strokes, and remember to say thank you!”

With a sniffle, Titty nodded, tears dripping down her face. "...Yes, ma'am!"

Immediately the paddle smashed against Titty's buttocks with such force it nearly knocked her over the sofa. Titty flailed her legs, squealing, before climbing back down and reassuming her position. "...One, ma'am! Thank you, ma'am!"

"Try to use your weight to counter the force of the impact. You've got a nice butt, Titty, and plenty of it. Use it to your advantage!"

Titty wiped her nose before lifting her butt high. "Aw, thank you!"

As Ninian delivered the second stroke, Titty pressed her bottom against the paddle, using her whole body weight to hold herself in place. Titty tried her best to endure, but after the ninth stroke her exhaustion finally caught up with her. Gasping for breath, her knees knocking, Titty sank to rest on

the back of the sofa. “N-nine, ma’am! Thank you, ma’am!”

“Head up, Titty.”

It took Titty a full six seconds before she could catch her breath and struggle back up into the position. Immediately Ninian delivered the tenth and final stroke. The force knocked Titty forward so far she flopped face-first down onto the couch. Ninian stretched her arms and wiped the sweat off her brow. “...And, that’s ten!”

Titty managed to choke out a few words in between racking sobs and heaving for air. “*Aaaah-guh!* ...Teeeen....ma’am.....thaaank yoooo....hoooo.”

Ninian scooped up Titty’s red apron and hat. “Up you get, Titty. Let’s get you dressed, and you may be on your way.”

Titty got a glimpse of her throbbing buttocks as she tied her apron strings. Then Ninian reached around to clap Titty’s buttocks, her hands glowing with

warm green light. “There, just a bit of healing magic...Enough to clean any cuts the thorns may have given you, at least, and to relieve the numbness. Now you’ll be able to feel your bum again!”

Sure enough, as Titty felt the healing magic coursing through her posterior, she felt the same stinging sensation she remembered returning with a vengeance. As she felt her buttocks being squeezed, Titty twisted her hips. “*Ooch!* Oh, dear! You really don’t have to do that!”

But Ninian kept a firm grip on each buttock, kneading them like dough. “Nonsense! It’s the least I can do. Can’t miss a chance to practice basic healing now that I’ve finally got the feel for it. Now, Titty, have you learned your lesson?”

As Titty eyed the bare flesh of Ninian’s soft, defenseless neck, she slowly opened her mouth, revealing her vampiric fangs. “Ah...of course! I’ll never be late delivering a pizza to you ever again...”

But before Titty could decide whether or not she would succumb to the temptation to suck Ninian's blood, Ninian surprised Titty with a final *clap* across both butt cheeks. Titty sucked down a breath and bounced in place, clutching her bottom. Strangely, it felt much better in one way and much worse in another way. The deep, dull, dolorous ache was gone, along with the dim knowledge that she would be bruised for weeks. But now that her bottom was "healed," Titty could keenly feel every torment she'd suffered, from the rash of the nettles to the stripes of the cane to the marks left by the thorn-covered paddle.

Then Ninian stuffed a few paper bills (each theoretically worth one iron coin) down the front of Titty's apron, tucking them firmly between her bosoms. "And here's a tip for you: find a new line of work."

As Titty noticed the tip, her mouth hung open. "Huh? But you said I did a bad job with the pizza delivery!"

Ninian folded her arms. "You did do a bad job with my pizza, but I'd say you paid your debt for that with the spanking. You may go. I won't turn you over to the authorities."

Titty looked lovingly at Ninian before noticing her pizza-delivery duffel bag. "Bloody meatballs! I still have one more delivery to make! I must be over three hours late by now!"

Ninian opened the door and gestured the way out. "How irresponsible. You'd best get going at once...Oh, and nudity is against the school dress code, so..."

Ninian's hand glowed with green Nymphish magic before she surprised Titty with a *swat* across the behind as she exited. Titty squeaked and jumped,

then looked at Ninian with seductive bedroom eyes. "*Ooo*, Ninny? What was that for?"

"Just giving you some proper clothing. It's a trick my Mom taught me one time. She caught me trying to sneak out of the house wearing a miniskirt. So...you're getting a new outfit."

Titty blinked and glanced back at the glowing green handprint across her behind. "...Outfit? What out—"

Vines of stinging nettles materialized from the glowing handprint, wrapping tightly around Titty's groin until they formed a full pair of "booty shorts." They slowly started to grow longer, creeping down her legs and up her belly like branching fingers. Titty yelped as she felt the immediate burn of the stinging nettles, gripping her pizza bag for dear life. "*Yeeowl!* Ninny! Stahp this crazy thiiiiii—"

Ninian slammed the door behind Titty and locked her out. With a yawn, Ninian stretched and approached her livestream. “Thanks for joining tonight’s study session, everyone. Remember, it is our responsibility to be the best scholars we can be so that we can oppose the forces of chaos and evil...”

Ninian grinned as she saw herself on screen, turning slowly to admire her new dominatrix outfit from all sides, and lightly tossed her hair. “...though I suppose a little chaos doesn’t hurt!”

Ninian closed the livestream and sat down to study her textbook. Maybe Anti-Cryptodemonology wasn’t the right fit for her, but Ninian was sure of one thing: she’d do whatever it took to graduate and get a good career fighting the forces of evil. Anything to avoid ending up as a pizza delivery girl.

The End

I'm The Sheriff In These Here Parts

By Yu May and JezebethNoir

"Bad girls, bad girls! Whatchu gonna do? Sheriff Humblehand is comin' for you!"

A montage of footage of perps being arrested played on Mary Jane's phone, along with the official, iconic theme song of *Shire Reaves*. She was seated at a folding table that prominently featured marijuana leaves, peace symbols, and rainbows among all her products.

As a dryad, her skin had a soft, earthy tone, and her eyes were a vivid forest green, which contrasted with the lovely shade of pink that represented the whites of her eyes. She wore bell-bottom jeans, a tie-dye shirt, and a crown of flowers.

A male narrator's voice boomed over the footage as the episode started. "Vandalism. Murder. Rape. Rampant littering. Cobywood was on the brink before the Shire Reaves got to work cleaning up this poor lil' town, full of helpless, hapless halflings. But the work of upholding law and order never ends."

Mary Jane was surrounded by other tables in the "Cobywood Coaches & Cowpokes Convention" artists' alley, but she was too busy watching the latest episode of her show to take care of any customers.

A little girl approached her stall. "Excuse me, Miss? I'd like to buy something fun."

Mary Jane held up a finger. "Not now, sprout. I'm watching something hilarious."

The narrator announced: "On tonight's episode: a bust on an illegal pornographic film studio, owned by a hot, single, succubus MILF who thinks she's above halfling law."

The scene cut to the local halfling sheriff putting a well-dressed, middle-aged succubus in handcuffs. Her skin was a warm scarlet hue, while her leather business suit was a darker shade of crimson and had a small hole for her long, pronged tail. She had her red-black hair up in a no-nonsense bun, with two little horns poking out.

In the background, a vampiress and a naked she-werewolf were having a catfight on a bed, both buck naked. "This is all your fault, bat bitch!"

"Who are you calling a bitch, wolf bitch? And how's it my fault? You're the one who was howling at the full—*ow!*"

The halfling sheriff and her deputy forcibly tackled the vampiress and the she-werewolf against the bed and started cuffing them.

The middle-aged succubus snarled. "Hey, watch it! Those are my actresses!"

The sheriff tipped her cowboy hat. “Oh, they are, are they? So that makes you the mastermind behind this illegal smut shoot, doesn’t it?”

The narrator’s voice boomed. “But this sassy succubus is about to find out that when the short arm of the law comes for you, it comes in swinging!”

The sheriff tapped the succubus across her rump with a baton. “All right, perp, we’re doing a strip search. Pants off, now!”

The succubus glared at the sheriff with pure menace. “What? That’s outrageous! Why, you filthy little—”

The sheriff answered with a sharp *swat* across the succubus’s behind.

She squealed and started to strip, struggling to step out of her skin-tight pants with her hands cuffed behind her back. “*Eeek!* All right, all right!”

The camera cut to show the horrified expression of the vampiress. “Oh, shit! We’ll cooperate, we’ll cooperate!”

The she-werewolf growled. “Woof! Woof! I’ll rip your throats out!”

The deputy swung a baton across the she-wolf’s bare buttocks. “Stop resisting arrest! You’re gonna get tased!”

Mary Jane smiled as she watched the proceedings. The curvy succubus was forced to undress herself while still handcuffed. “Sweet! I love this show. You know, it’s all filmed right here in Cobywood?”

The little girl blinked, her eyes wide as she looked at the footage of the halfling deputy ferociously spanking the werewolf. “…You don’t say? I’m not allowed to watch that show on the TV.”

“Really? Shoot, sucks to be you. But why won’t your parents let you watch it? It’s good, wholesome police stuff.”

Meanwhile, on the phone screen, the camera cut to a barely censored image of the middle-aged succubus being frog-marched, butt naked, through the crowded streets of Cobywood. "Hey! You can't do this to me! I have rights! I demand legal representation! I want a lawyer! I want my panties!"

Mary Jane whistled in awe. "Wow! I wonder if I can get Sheriff Humblehand's autograph?"

On the screen, the succubus gasped as she was forced into a spread-eagle position across a white table. "What are you buggers doing back there?"

Sheriff Humblehand pulled on a latex glove with a *snap*. "Just gonna perform a quick cavity search. Routine safety precaution. Deputy Barstool? Better get the vibrator."

"Vibrator? Why do you need that for a cavity—*oooh!* Cold hands! No drugs! I don't keep my drugs there!"

The sheriff nodded and continued fingering the prisoner. “Deputy, make a note that the prisoner claimed to be in possession of drugs during her search.”

The succubus squirmed, twisting her hips to break free from the sheriff’s grasp. “I did not say that, you snub-nosed, curly-tailed—*eep!* Not there! Don’t poke me there!”

Sheriff Humblehand delivered a *slap* across the succubus’ lower buttocks. “And that’s for resisting an officer of the law while she is giving a lawful command. Why, I oughta paddle yer rump.”

“Do your worst! I love a good spanking. It turns me on!”

“Ugh! Typical succubi. Deputy, make a note of that for the perp’s case file. We’ll have to escalate our prison disciplinary methods. Hold still, perp, you’re getting the vibrator.”

The succubus trembled as the vibrator was inserted. "I want my lawyer, you fu—*ow! Aah-how!* ... Bah, you call that a vibrator? That barely tickles!"

The sheriff raised her hand high. "Oh, I'll tickle you, perp."

Mary Jane's eyes shone as she brushed aside the raw hemp shoots that covered her head like hair. "Oooh, her ass is grass."

Then the spanking began in earnest. Most episodes of the show were wall-to-wall corporal punishment sequences.

The little girl looked terribly nervous. "So, you got anything to sell me, or not?"

Mary Jane looked up from her phone, scowling, and waved a hand. "Beat it, kid. I'm closing up shop for the day."

The child was dressed in an adorable poodle skirt, with ribbons in her hair. "But you got some dope

art... so you gotta have some good stuff for me, right?"

Mary Jane grumbled and tossed aside her phone. "Yeah, yeah, 4-20 meme stuff, ha ha. Got the prices for buttons and stickers right there. If you can read, just toss a few bucks in the jar."

"No, no, not the art... I'm interested in the real thing. You know, the good stuff!"

"Oh, screw you, brat, my art rocks. Hang on..." Mary Jane glanced around the tables. No one was paying close attention. "...All right, what are you looking for? If you need something to knock you out, I don't carry any of that heavy 'purple rain' kush. But I've got a few smooth hybrids."

The little girl cocked her head. "I just need something for a sleepover with my girlfriends. Nothing too strong. Can you just show me what you got?"

Mary Jane eyed the little girl. “Hang on, aren’t you a little young to be getting high at parties? How old are you?”

“Um... I’m sixteen?”

“Oh, that’s a relief. I was stoned all through high school. Here, I’ve got some blue dream for ya. Cut fresh.” Mary Jane pulled aside one of her blue-dyed marijuana dreadlocks, clipped it, and set the raw plant in front of the little girl. “Uh, you’ll have to refine it. I don’t really do that either. That’ll be one gee.”

The little girl pulled out a badge and a taser. “Freeze! Deputy Shire Reaves! You’re under arrest for Attempted Possession with Intent to Deliver or Distribute a Controlled Substance!”

A film crew jumped out from behind the buildings that surrounded artists’ alley, all wearing gear that proclaimed them to be part of the official *Shire Reaves* camera team.

Mary Jane blinked twice. “Aw, fuck. It’s always the halfling cops.”

***

Mary Jane was cuffed and escorted to a cream-colored interrogation room, with a single table and two plastic chairs.

Across from her, a middle-aged halfling woman, who Mary Jane immediately recognized as Sheriff Humblehand from the reality TV show, kicked her imitation-leather cowboy boots up on the table. “Round these parts, we don’t take kindly to city folks selling drugs to our kiddos.”

Mary Jane rolled her eyes and waved her handcuffed wrists dramatically. “She wasn’t a kiddo. She looks older than me. What are you, three hundred and thirty-three?”

“No, that’s… none of your business,” said the deputy, who was still dressed in her little-girl costume.

The sheriff polished her badge. “You have any idea how much trouble you’re in, missy?”

“Yeah, yeah, I’m a bad influence and a no-good pothead. Can I call my lawyer now? Oh, boy, my mommy and daddy are going to give you an earful if they have to drive out all the way here to pick me up.”

“Phone’s right there. You can make your call.”

Mary Jane noticed an antique, two-piece phone on the wall. “Huh, what the shizz is that thing? Some sort of telegram machine?”

“It’s a perfectly functional phone. Go ahead. Make your call.”

“Are you kidding? I don’t know my lawyer’s number. It’s on my phone. Give it!”

The sheriff held up Mary Jane’s smartphone. “Of course. Here in Cobywood, we stand for law and order. Make your call.”

Mary Jane puffed her hair out of her eyes and brought up her lawyer on speed dial. “Hey, Portia? I got catfished by a halfling cop again.”

“Gods, Mary! You were almost off parole! Where are you?”

“Cobywood Coaches & Cowpokes Convention.”

“What? Some kind of board-game store?”

“It’s the cosplay nerd convention. You know, halfling cowboys fighting racially insensitive caricatures of indigenous goblin natives.”

“halflings? Shit! You’re in the halfling quarter? Oh, fuck, fuck, fuck! Okay, listen carefully, whatever you do, do not unlock your phone for—”

Sheriff Humblehand snatched Mary’s phone back from her and started thumbing rapidly through her files. “And… airdropped. Deputy, kindly sort those files under ‘evidence.’”

Mary Jane snarled. “Hey! Gimme that back!”

Sheriff Humblehand handed the phone back. "Here you go. Tell your lawyer not to worry... We ain't gonna lynch ya."

Portia's voice crackled over the phone. "Don't you dare! I'll file a motion for change of venue! We'll sue the department of parks and recreation! We'll—"

Mary Jane's phone died. Sheriff Humblehand drummed her fingers together. "Huh. You didn't keep it charged? How irresponsible. Welp, that was your phone call. Do you need the court to provide you with a lawyer?"

"Are you retarded? That was my lawyer! Let me use the—"

"All right. Court is now in session. Do you have legal representation?"

"...What do you mean court's in session? You're the police chief."

The sheriff tipped her cowboy hat. “Correction. I’m the sheriff in these here parts. Ain’t ya never heard of frontier justice? Out here in the country, we don’t got the money nor time for a bunch of fancy lawyerin’ loopholes.”

“Are you fucking high? This isn’t the frontier. This is a tourist trap. You work for a movie studio.”

“...I work for the good folks of Cobywood. It may well be that a bunch of rich folks own the buildings, but I stand for something more. You see that bee-yoo-tiful sunset on the horizon? That’s the wild, untamed West. This is our land. And it’s our job to protect it. Cherish it.”

“That sunset is a freakin’ painted set piece, you nazi!”

Sheriff Humblehand stood and stomped around the table, her cowboy hat barely peeking above the top. She came to a halt below Mary Jane’s seat. “Correction. It ain’t painted. It’s AI-generated.

Apparently, that's what sunsets used to look like, once upon a time. It ain't much, but it's all we got to remember those days. And round here, we care about preserving that memory. So that means..."

The sheriff pulled open a file folder labeled "Educational Historical Reenactment Employment Forms."

"...we got our own ways of dealing with troublemakers 'round here that don't involve no city-slicker courts n' appeals."

"I want a lawyer."

"Can do. Deputy Barstool? You're her lawyer. Take the prisoner to booking."

***

It turned out that booking was done in the room next door, in the sheriff's personal office. It was only slightly less cramped than the interrogation room. Deputy Barstool and a spectacled gnomish

secretary both worked at child-sized cubicles in either corner, typing away madly at antique keyboards.

Sheriff Humblehand's desk dominated the center of the room, and behind it was a single cell, which held a buck-naked, middle-aged succubus who was tied to a chair, drooling.

The moment they entered, the succubus seemed to awaken from a daze and snapped up her head. "I want a lawyer!"

Mary Jane's mouth hung open. "Ooh! You're the hot milf from the last episode of *Shire Reaves*! So, do you do porn?"

The succubus glared at Mary Jane, her eyes blazing. "Not anymore, I don't. I'm legit now. I direct and produce avant-garde adult films!"

Sheriff Humblehand snapped her fingers, and a skeleton key floated to her hand. "I thought you

were a lawyer. You keep jawing like you are one, anyhow."

The succubus snarled, her voice sultry. "I'm a Free Speech and Obscenities Law specialist! And I want a criminal attorney."

The sheriff sighed. "All right, Deputy Barstool, can you take on another hopeless case?"

"You're going to make me go overtime again!"

"That's no problem. We don't pay overtime."

The succubus stamped her feet. "I don't want the deputy for my lawyer!"

"Huh. Well, have it your way. Missus Erdman? Looks like you're working overtime."

The spectacled gnome woman curled her lip and pulled out a clipboard. "But my kids are expecting me. They're having piano lessons."

“Could you call to ask their teacher to watch them for a bit?”

“Oh, I don’t pay for piano lessons. It’s a free app on their tablets. Ah well, I guess the apartment’s locked. Let’s just get this over with. Hello, Miss Bat-Mahlat. I will be playing the role of your legal defense.”

Spitting with rage, the succubus pulled at the restraints that held her secure. “No, that’s not what I meant! This is a gods-damned monkey trial!”

Mary Jane gasped. “Ooh, I don’t think little people like being called monkeys anymore. What’s the right term for you guys?”

Deputy Barstool fetched a clipboard of her own. “I think you’re mixing us up with dwarves. But they don’t like being called ‘little people’ either.”

Sheriff Humblehand produced a gavel and slammed it. “Court is now in session.”

Instantly the lock of the cell popped open, and the chair floated in the air, along with the struggling succubus, before coming to rest next to Mary Jane, who watched the proceedings in horror.

The sheriff turned to Mrs. Erdman. “Would the defense like to make an opening statement?”

“Nope. My client’s clearly guilty, your honor.”

The succubus hopped up and down in her chair. “Not guilty! Not guilty!”

Mrs. Erdman whispered. “Relax! If you plead guilty, I can get you a plea deal!”

“This is an outrage! Porn is legal! It’s clearly protected under free speech.”

The sheriff sighed. “You’re not on trial for filming porn. This is a business zoning violation. You’d have been fine filming your smut almost anywhere, but you picked our quiet little town to film.”

Hellfire seemed to billow around the naked succubus. “Are you fucking kidding me? That halfling-cops show of yours is full of X-rated spanking content!”

The deputy shrugged. “It’s a halfling thing. We got grandfathered in. You didn’t.”

“Oh, so I’d have been fine if I was a furry-footed half-pint?”

Deputy Barstool held up a pen. “Permission to treat the witness as hostile, your honor?”

“Any objections from the defense counsel?”

“No objections, your honor.”

The succubus rocked wildly back and forth in her chair. “This is not how a trial works! You’re just quoting buzzwords you heard on *Law & Chaos*!”

Deputy Barstool jabbed her pen into the succubus’ naked breast. “Don’t play innocent. You knew full

well we don't allow pornographic film shoots in our local community, didn't you?"

"Look, this is all my marketing department's fault! They had this big idea that if we filmed it in a halfling community, we could technically market it as 'an illegal porn shoot,' which is big for maximizing keyword search results. We didn't think anyone would actually care! We weren't in public!"

Deputy Barstool pointed dramatically. "Objection! So you admit that you knowingly shot an illegal porn shoot?"

Mrs. Erdman mirrored the same pose. "Objection! My client isn't on trial for shooting porn! She only admitted that she knowingly violated our business zoning restrictions! I hold you in contempt of court!"

Sheriff Humblehand slammed her gavel down. "Overruled! It's my job to hold the accused in contempt of court, not yours, counsel. Miss

Bat-Mahlat, I'm holding you in contempt of court."

"Oh, fuck you, and fuck the horse you rode into town on!"

"I prefer ponies. We'll proceed with your case tomorrow. Court is adjourned. Now, as for the matter of your penalty for showing contempt of court..."

The succubus' chair floated into the air again. The ropes binding the succubus went slack, and the succubus rose into the air. With a wet *schlop!* a purple rubber dildo slipped loose from between her legs, flopping about wildly. Mary Jane stared in horror. "Is that... a dildo? Why do you have that attached to a chair?"

The sheriff smiled. "Because routine spanking wasn't getting results. The defendant forced us to it, I'm afraid."

"What is going—"

Mary Jane faltered as she saw the scene unfold.

The succubus flailed her legs as she twisted in midair, yelping. Then she settled back on the chair facing backwards, the dildo rising of its own accord to slip right back in place in her vagina. “Oh no! Not this again... *Ooop! Aaaw, golly!*”

Then a few objects displayed on the wall started to glow and levitated off their hooks: a leather riding crop and a strange, weathered-looking wooden gourd. They flew toward the succubus and spiraled around her.

The succubus’ eyes went wide as she finally noticed the two objects. She tried to twist to follow the objects, but the ropes bound her hands and ankles in place, with her ass facing backwards. “No! I do not consent to be spanked! I do not consent! I do not—”

The riding crop snapped across the succubus' ass, and she squealed. "*Aaargh! Fuuuck...* Fuck you! Is that all you've got, redneck?"

The sheriff shrugged. "We can spank you harder, if that's what you want."

"I've gotten spanked harder by double-amputee grandmothers! Do your worst, hick!"

"You asked for it. Counsel, make sure you make a note of the prisoner's consent to submit to further corporal punishment for the court record. The defendant is welcome to have a copy if she wants it. Who knows? Maybe it'll boost her business."

Then the gourd twisted in midair, and Mary Jane finally recognized its strangely phallic shape. It was an old-fashioned wooden wild-west dildo.

The succubus' eyes went wide in horror. "No! I already told you, I don't film porn anymore! I only produce—"

The rough, splintered gourd-dildo flew like a rocket, penetrating deep into the succubus' anus. Then the riding crop aimed another *slap* across her other buttock, and the gourd began thrusting. The succubus screeched, then moaned. "*Yeeeaaaagh! Mmmeeee-yooowww! My asssss!*"

As the succubus started to squeal in ecstasy, Sheriff Humblehand turned to look at Mary Jane. "Well, that takes care of the first case on the docket for the day. Let's move on to the matter of *Cobywood v. Mary Jane*."

Mary Jane dropped to her knees, holding up her cuffed hands. "I'm sorry! Please don't hurt me! I won't do it again! I'll be a good girl!"

Sheriff Humblehand waved her hands humbly. "Child, relax! You're not the first kid we've busted for slinging hemp, and you probably won't be the last. Now, I want to help you think through your current situation. You have broken the law. You have disrespected our community values and

threatened our traditional, wholesome halfling culture. But your life isn't over. Ever heard the phrase, 'Let the punishment fit the crime'?"

Mary Jane nodded slowly, her lip quivering. "Uh... huh?"

"Well, you're not like that succubus. She's a hardened white-collar criminal. But you? You're a dumb kid."

Mary Jane pouted. "I'm not a kid! I'm a legal adult, you prune!"

For nine long, agonizing seconds, the sheriff did not react.

The only sound that could be heard was the succubus' cries of agony, which were gradually growing more and more orgasmic.

Slowly, deliberately, the sheriff made a single mark on her clipboard. "As I was saying, since we have broad prosecutorial discretion in the halfling

quarter, that means we can look for solutions outside of the prison-industrial complex. You know what convicts call prison? School. We could throw the book at you and have you shipped to a mega-metropolitan corporate incarceration center. But I don't think someone like you deserves imprisonment, Miss Jane. I think you just need a little wake-up call. So how about we agree to a plea deal?"

Gasping, the succubus twisted in her chair. "*Eep!* Don't listen to them! Fight for your rights! Just demand a lawyer! The only fucking word out of your mouth should be lawyer, lawyer..."

The riding crop and dildo both doubled the pace of the torment, and the succubus howled. "*Laaaawyeeeeer! Oooooh, yeah! Keep violating my rights, you pigs! I'll sue! Sooo-hoo-hooooooooo! Hoo-yaaah!*"

The sheriff waved her hand, and a gag flew across the succubus' mouth. "Never mind that load a'

horse puckey. Look, you made a bad decision, kid. Now you've got the chance to make a good decision. I'm open to a plea deal. If you're willing to take responsibility, there's no need for a stiff sentence. You can just do a few months of community service, and you'll be free to go. No hard time. No felony charges stuck on your permanent record every time you apply for a job."

"Oh, I'm not worried about that kind of capitalist stuff. Daddy says I can be whatever I want to be, and I want to be an artist/poet/singer/songwriter."

The sheriff drummed her fingers together. "Then why don't we just put this unfortunate business behind us? You agree to pay back your debt to society, and you can get back to picture-painting, or poem-writing, or whatever it is you want to."

Mary Jane glanced at the secretary. "Hmm, what do you think, lawyer lady?"

"I'm legally required to inform you that I have not passed the bar, and this is not legal advice. But if you were my daughter, I'd tell you to just take the plea deal, sweetie."

Mary Jane nodded. "Hmm. Okay! I plead guilty, your orneryness!"

Sheriff Humblehand's eyes narrowed. "You're pleading guilty to what, exactly?"

"Oh, possession of cannabis, I guess? With intent to distribute and stuff. Plus, I've been growing my hair out, and it's definitely reaching that level of stank that's sure to hit like a truck. I confess."

The sheriff beamed. "Really? Well, land sakes! That makes things easier."

"So we're good now, right?"

The sheriff slammed down her gavel. "Miss Mary Jane, I find you guilty on all counts and sentence you to an indefinite period of community service."

"Sweet! So how long is that? I've got tickets to a concert next week. It's *The Ungrateful Undead: Back from the Grave Tour*!"

Sheriff Humblehand put away her gavel and stood up in her chair. "A week? Well, child, it's not likely. I suppose that will depend on whether you can get time off for good behavior."

Mary Jane flared her nostrils, her pink eyes boggling. "What? This is a once-in-a-lifetime musical event! Do you have any idea how much my Mommy and Daddy paid for these tickets?"

"Nope. Now, let's discuss the first part of your community service. The goal of this lesson is to teach you respect and civility. Community service ends when you've shown true remorse and repentance."

Mary Jane pouted and narrowed her eyes. "Well, I'm sorry. I won't do it again, or whatever. There. Now you have to forgive me."

The sheriff sighed. “Young lady, I think what you need first is to learn some respect. Stand up and set your hands on my desk. You’re getting a good lickin’.”

Mary Jane complied, pursing her lips. “Oh, like soul kissing? Well, I am pansexual, and I’m flattered you asked. Sure, let’s make out.”

The sheriff pulled a razor strap out of her desk, stood on the desk to reach Mary Jane’s eye level, and snapped the leather strip between her hands. “Oh, you’re gonna feel a few kisses all right, you whippersnapper. Right on your duff. Bend over.”

Mary Jane glanced back at her backside, her faded jeans doing nothing to hide the shape of her naturally beautiful bottom. “What, my ass? ...Oh, you’re into butt stuff! Well, I’ve never tried that before, but I’m pretty open-minded when it comes to—”

With precise aim, the sheriff whipped the razor strap across the seat of her pants. Mary Jane yelped and hopped in place, but her hands seemed to be rooted to the desk. "*Eek!* Woah! Communication! Communication is key to consent!"

The sheriff jabbed a finger downward. "Young lady, you drop them britches. You're getting your first whuppin' on your bare ass!"

Mary Jane danced in place, wanting to rub her bottom but unable to move her hands. "Whuppin'? ...Wait a minute, you're going to spank me?"

"Of course I'm gonna spank you, ya idjit! D'ja think I was gonna smooch it?"

"But you can't spank me! I've never been spanked before!"

The succubus paused her muffled moaning and twisted in her seat to look at Mary Jane. "*Mmff? Mang omph! Muff wunna worf'wiffoo!*"

The sheriff snapped her razor strap in the general direction of the succubus. Instantly the riding crop and the dildo paused their acts of torture. “None of that noise! You know that interrupting court proceedings is another contempt-of-court charge.”

The succubus made puppy-dog eyes. “*Muff, mewwiff!*”

The sheriff growled, then snapped her fingers. “Fine, let’s hear what the nudie-picture actress has to say.”

But nothing happened. Sheriff Humblehand snapped her fingers a few more times, then stamped her foot. “Missus Erdman, will you kindly ungag the prisoner? My magic can’t wrangle more’n one ornery crook at once.”

The gnome undid the gag, and the succubus coughed. “Ack! What do you use that rag for, shoe polishing? Just gag me with a spoon, why don’t you?”

The riding crop landed two quick, precise *swats*, and the succubus squealed. "*Ooow! Owwie! Ay!* Okay, okay, I just want to talk to the kid! Look, weed-girl, are you telling me you've never been spanked? Like, you're a vanilla virgin when it comes to BDSM stuff? That's fucking gold! People eat that shit up! If you let me sign you as an actress, I can get you in select movie theaters! Think of it! Your ass, on the big screen!"

"Enough! You're still trying to produce porn in my town? You haven't learned a durn thing!" Sheriff Humblehand tried to snap her fingers, but the succubus' gag didn't move. "Ugh! Missus Erdman, the gag!"

"No! Wait! I can cut you all in on it. Think of the royalties! I'll buy you a golden—*dilffft!*"

Then the riding crop and the two dildos went back to their merry work.

Ignoring the succubus' muffled moans, Sheriff Humblehand slowly turned to face Mary Jane. "My apologies. We've never had to process this many convicts all at once. Now, the key to a good spanking is for you to participate in your own punishment. Compliance is a good first step to showing true contrition. Miss Jane, I'd like you to drop your britches, lift your shirt, and stick out your ass for me."

Mary Jane's eyes went wide. "But... if I do that... everybody will see my butt!"

"And it's only right they should. You've been a right lil' ass, little lady. So it's only fittin' that your bad lil' ass pay the price."

Her hands trembling, Mary Jane reached for the waistband of her jeans. "So if I let you spank me... you'll let me go?"

Sheriff Humblehand smiled. "There's no getting out of this spanking, lil' missy. We either slap your

heinie or slap you with a felony charge, same as her."

Mary Jane glanced at the succubus, who was currently drooling past her gag. The riding crop and dildo had both sped up to a brisk pace. Quickly Mary Jane dropped her jeans. "Okay, fine! I'll comply. Let's just get this over with already."

Immediately Sheriff Humblehand snapped the razor strap across Mary Jane's bottom, which was now protected by only a T-shirt and a pair of panties. "Nope! You ain't listenin'!"

Mary Jane yelped and grabbed her buttocks tight with both hands. "*Oowwweee!*"

The sheriff snapped her fingers, and Mary Jane's hands were roughly pulled away, as if by invisible hands, and slapped back onto the desk. "None of that fool dancin'. You may move your hands when instructed, then put 'em right back when you're

finished. I told you once already, so this is your last warning. Drop your britches and lift your shirt!"

Mary Jane shook her head, but it felt like her palms were ingrained into the desk. "Please, ma'am! Just spank me and get it over with! But don't make me strip!"

The sheriff landed another stroke of the strap. "You strip before you get the strap. We ain't even started yet. Obey, girlie!"

Mary Jane hissed with discomfort, then rushed to comply. Suddenly she found her hands were free. She slid down her panties, which were decorated with a dove and olive branch, and struggled to lift her shirt. "It keeps slipping down!"

SNAP!

"*Eeeek!*" Mary Jane lifted her shirt up and over her shoulders, letting her naked breasts flop free, and put her hands on the desk.

The sheriff took a good long gander at Mary Jane's boobs. "That's more like it. Now we may begin. This spankin's only meant to act as a warm-up, to get you in the proper mindset. Ya see, you've been arrogant. You got too big for yer britches, so now you've lost all rights to wear them britches. Now, you said you're an adult. Exactly how old are ya, Miss Jane?"

"Two hundred and ten."

"... And about how old is that considered, in dryad terms?"

"Oh, shoot, that's right, you halflings are short-lived too. Well, we dryads can get our driver's license on our hundred-and-sixtieth birthday. And since my last birthday, I can finally drink fermented berry juice. Does that help?"

"I see. So you're just at the start of your journey as a young adult. Well, I aim to make sure you remember your lesson for the next two hundred

and ten years. Ordinarily you would get one stroke for every year of life, but that's a bit much for just a warm-up. I think twenty-one will suffice for now."

"Twenty? With that thing? I won't have an ass left!"

"Don't doubt yourself. And I said twenty-one..." The sheriff landed a *slash* with the strap. "...plus another one to grow on. One."

Mary Jane let out a long, trailing, guttural howl, only to be caught off guard by the second stroke. The sheriff slowly counted, "Two," ignoring Mary Jane's protests and pleas.

"Oh, gawd! No, no, no, hurts too much! Safe word! I want a safe word!"

THWACK!

"*Aaah!*"

"Three," counted the sheriff, her face bored.

"Please! *Puh-leeeeze!*"

The sheriff landed the fourth stroke with extra tugging force at the immediate point of impact, so that the strap seemed to rip backwards across the dryad's fleshy butt cheeks. "Four."

Mary Jane's voice warbled as she threw back her head to scream, her tongue twisting across her teeth. "*Aaaaaaaargh!*"

Mary Jane tensed her buttocks, anticipating the fifth stroke, but it didn't come. Slowly the sheriff climbed off the desk to reposition herself behind her victim and disappeared from Mary Jane's line of sight.

Gasping, the teary-eyed dryad looked all around the room, desperate to find anyone or anything that could rescue her. As the terrible reprieve dragged on, she felt six angry welts starting to rise and throb across her buttocks, each vying for her attention. "Oh, sweet Lucy in the sky with diamonds! Okay, you win! Let's call my parents! They'll buy you

whatever you want! A new hat! A badge made of gold! A whole—"

The sheriff landed a mean upward stroke.

SHHWACK!

"Five."

Mary Jane's whole body shivered.
"*Aaaireeeeee—eeep!* My tongue! Stop! I bit my tongue!"

"Then grit your teeth, fool child."

Clenching her jaw, Mary Jane tried to twist to look over her shoulder. If only she knew when the next stroke was coming, she could prepare herself for it.
"Pleee—"

The sixth stroke was aimed downwards, in a mirror image of the last stroke.

Still gritting her teeth, Mary Jane seethed.
"*Puh–llleeeeeeze!*"

The sheriff slapped her hand across Mary Jane's bottom and fondled it roughly, squeezing each of the angry welts in turn. "Six... You just tried to bribe me, young lady. But none of your big-city grift is gonna get you out of facing justice in my town. See, in Cobywood, we halflings weren't born with a silver spoon in our mouths. But we were reared with a spoon. A wooden spoon, right 'cross our rear ends, whenever we needed it. And that's how we all learned our good halfling sense."

The sheriff released her grasp on Mary Jane's backside. Sensing what was coming, Mary Jane turned to look at her tormenter. "I'm sorry! I didn't mean to offend you! I'm so sorry! Really I am!"

But all she saw was Sheriff Humblehand raising the razor strap for the next stroke. "Hold still."

When the seventh stroke landed, Mary Jane screamed again, but by the eighth stroke she was struggling to catch her breath.

After the tenth stroke, Mary Jane laid her forehead on the desk, sobbing, which only served to raise her bottom higher. The razor strap seemed to rip across the flesh of her buttocks, scorching the soft, sensitive epidermis that represented the dryad's skin.

"Eleven."

Mary Jane wheezed, her voice growing weaker. "*Aaauuu!* Oh, mercy! Have pity on me!"

The twelfth stroke was aimed across the dryad's upper thighs, leaving a fresh welt across the previously unmarked territory. "Twelve."

Mary Jane took a choking, shuddering breath, then made another attempt to hold still.

But after the sixteenth stroke, her resolve crumbled. "*Agh!* No more! No more spanking!"

Mary Jane tried to struggle free from the desk, only to flop forward and collapse across it, gripping the far side, gasping for air.

Humblehand paused for a moment, waiting for the exact moment her victim ran out of breath, and swung the razor strap with the full force of her arm. "Seventeen."

Mary Jane mewled and wailed, but all the fight had been spanked out of her long ago.

Finally the sheriff finished. "And... twenty-two. That's yer one to grow on. How are you feeling, Miss Jane?"

"*Buuwaaaaaaaugh!*"

"Criminy! We're making progress already. But it's getting late, so I suggest we adjourn court for the day and continue tomorrow."

Mary Jane lifted herself up on her elbows. "Is... is it over?"

"Yup. Your warm-up spanking is over. Tomorrow morning we will administer judicial corporal punishment for your illegal possession and attempted distribution of cannabis."

Mary Jane spun her head around, her hemp hair flopping wildly. "Huh? That wasn't the corporal punishment? You... you big meanie! You lied to me!"

Using her rough, calloused hand, the sheriff landed a firm *slap* across Mary Jane's buttocks. It stung nearly as much as the razor strap and had even more weight behind it. The dryad howled as she felt the impact reverberate through her tender glutes. The sheriff shook her hand. "I never once told a fib. But I can see we have more work to do. Better lock her up for the night, deputy."

"But Sheriff, there's only one cell, and prisoner number 3469 is probably gonna need the cot more..."

They all turned to look at the succubus. As the riding crop landed a ferocious *strike*, it left a white mark in the shape of a little heart, which quickly flushed to a deep blood red. Bat-Mahlat arched her back, craning her neck to gasp, before slumping her head forward onto the chair, gurgling. By this point the succubus' ass and thighs were completely covered in raised, heart-shaped blisters. Then Bat-Mahlat began to thrust her hips up and down along with the rhythm of the two objects penetrating her, as if trying to obediently contribute to her own torment for some strange reason. "*Moooooooorthhhpt! Nuh'mooooooooorrr'th!*"

Mrs. Erdman sniggered. "Oh, I think the succubus will definitely need to sleep on her stomach tonight."

The sheriff sighed and snapped her fingers. "Fair 'nuff. I'll have to get creative to make sleeping

arrangements for Miss Jane. Miss Bat-Mahlat, are you ready to behave yourself?"

The objects tormenting the succubus paused, and her ropes and gag fell away. With a final *pop*, the wooden dildo pulled free from her asshole. The succubus stood, trembling, and the dildo slipped free from her pussy. "You can... lick my ass."

"All right. Counsel, make a note that the defendant consented to anal whipping."

The sheriff snapped her fingers again, and the succubus floated into the air and hovered toward the bed. "N-No! What are you up to now? I did not consent to any of this!"

Glowing shackles appeared around the succubus' wrists and ankles and slowly pulled her taut, holding her in midair, fully exposing her nether regions. The succubus tugged at the restraints, then froze as she saw the riding crop float slowly toward

her buttocks. “Oh no! N-not that! Any—Anything but—”

Then the riding crop snapped right across the succubus’ asshole.

Mary Jane couldn’t take her eyes off the scene as the succubus’ torment began all over again.

After only three strokes, the succubus’ arguments quickly melted into incoherent blubbering. “*Guuuaaaaagh! Guh! Awwwwshih! Ugh! Uuuwaaaaaugh!*”

Mary Jane watched in horror until she felt the sheriff pinching her chin. Sheriff Humblehand patted the dryad’s buttocks gently, looking deep into her eyes. “Now, as for you, are you ready to be a good girl who’s ready to turn over a new leaf, or are you going to be a bad egg like that fool demoness?”

Mary Jane saw the sheriff's stern face start to go blurry behind her fresh tears. "I'll b-be a g-good gug-g-g-girl!"

Sheriff Humblehand smiled. "Well, slap my tush and call me a baby, that's a relief. In that case, I have just the spot for you to bed down for the night."

The sheriff snapped her fingers, and a large decorative potted plant hovered into the air. The plant twisted itself free and dropped into the trash. Then the rustic, painted ceramic pot floated toward Mary Jane. As she realized what was about to happen, the young dryad shook her head before she herself started to float. "Oh, n-no! We d-dryads don't actually have to use flower pots. You see—"

The ceramic pot slammed against her buttocks with force, trapping her firmly inside with her heels high above her head. Mary Jane gripped the edges of the pot, her lip quivering, before she fought to catch her breath. "Oof! That's—That is actually a common misconception. In fact, we vastly prefer

not to have to fall asleep in tree form, apart from ceremonial occasions. I haven't needed one of these since I was a sapling! It's completely unnecessary for—"

Still trapped in the pot, Mary Jane floated inside the cell and dropped to the floor with a hard *bump*. Then a small bag of nutritional soil tipped over and covered her in a dusty brown cloud. Mary Jane spluttered and spat out a clod of dirt. "No! I'm not just some potted plant! And I'm not a baby anymore! This is completely demeaning!"

Mrs. Erdman adjusted her glasses. "Actually, it's pronounced Damask."

The sheriff patted down the soil trapping the dryad, then turned her attention to the succubus. "Miss Bat-Mahlat, are you ready to comply with orders now? I can leave you like that all night if you prefer."

The succubus let out a guttural scream but managed to flash two middle fingers.

The sheriff stroked her chin, then snapped her fingers. “Hmm, so it’s another contempt-of-court violation? You know what that means! A double violation.”

The riding crop paused its whipping motion. Instantly the wooden and rubber dildos flew back into place, twisting roughly to penetrate both of the succubus’ orifices.

The succubus choked, then let out a long, low groan. “*Ooooooggsh!*”

Slowly the shackles holding the succubus in midair lowered her down onto the cot. As if on reflex, the succubus rested on her elbows and knees, lifting her hips high into the air behind her. The two dildos continued to pump slowly of their own volition. The sheriff clapped her hands. “That’s a wrap! Court will reconvene tomorrow to discuss the

matter of *Cobywood v. Bat-Mahlat*. Miss Mary Jane, you have been placed on a period of probation pending the completion of your term of community service. As for you, Miss Bat-Mahlat…"

The sheriff patted the succubus' naked thighs, each in turn. "…You would do well to follow Miss Jane's example. She might just get time off for good behavior."

The succubus moaned. "*Guuuuhh…*"

Deputy Barstool and Mrs. Erdman helped lock up. Sheriff Humblehand tipped her hat, then shut off the light switch. "Lights out, prisoners."

***

The minutes dragged on and on. Mary Jane fell into a furtive sleep, only to be awakened by the sounds of the succubus' ongoing torment.

Bat-Mahlat's muffled groans increased in intensity, along with the pulsing motion of the two phalluses,

until she finally climaxed, spasmed, and collapsed onto her stomach on her cot, whimpering. The two objects continued pumping back and forth slowly, but at a slightly gentler pace than before.

Mary Jane watched in horror from her flower pot. "How can you let them do that to you?"

The succubus flashed a red-hot glare at the dryad. "Me? You're the one who surrendered to the plea deal!"

"Well, duh! If I hadn't, I'd be completely screwed!"

"So you just bend over and let the government fuck you in the ass? Pathetic!"

"You're one to talk, skank!"

The succubus glanced backward at the two objects penetrating her. "They'll never break me. I was a successful porn actress. This is kid stuff for me. Just keep asking for a lawyer. They'll eventually have to

provide you with one, even in a halfling cultural-preservation zone."

"If I had known they allow such barbaric punishments in the halfling quarter, I'd never have joined the artists' alley in the first place!"

The succubus shrugged. "Eh, it's their culture. halflings basically invented the entertainment industry. Part of what attracted me to this sector. If they want to hold onto a few antiquated traditions, who am I to judge?"

"But hitting people? It's like something out of the dark ages!"

The succubus scoffed. "Bah! You've clearly never been a guest in the big house. Spoiled kid."

Mary Jane almost spat. "Shows what you know! I was in juvie once!"

"'Til mommy and daddy paid your bail?"

Mary Jane bit her lip. "I still had to do house arrest and community service! I paid my debt to society."

The succubus winced as she felt the two dildos both pump her at the same moment, before they returned to their usual gentle rhythm. "*Rrrmm!* ... What'd you do? Another weed-related charge?"

"...It was an accident."

"Oh, please. Pull the other one! How do you accidentally pass off weed to someone?"

Mary Jane looked away. "I... I just gave a boy a few locks of my hair, okay? I didn't think he'd tell on me."

The succubus tried to make a mock, babyish cooing sound before the dildos caught her off guard again. "*Awww—ah!*—So... you got your heart broken?"

"I don't want to talk about it with you, thanks. But I'm not doing another stint in prison. Period."

Both of the prisoners harrumphed and looked away from one another. After another hour or two of furtive sleep, the lights clicked back on. The moment that Bat-Mahlat's eyes fluttered open, the two dildos immediately seemed to "wake up" and went to work on her.

Sheriff Humblehand entered the office alone and held up a hand. "Hang on. Need my morning coffee first. I get especially grouchy without it."

Mary Jane and Bat-Mahlat kept their mouths shut tight as the sheriff made a pot of hot, sludgy black coffee.

She took a slow sip from a mug decorated with the words "Second Breakfast Club." "Ah, that hit the spot. For your sake, let's hope the counsels for the prosecution and the defense both arrive on time today. I'd hate to have to start the morning with another two-hour paddling session."

Mary Jane swallowed. She wasn't sure who got paddled if the employees arrived late, but she didn't want to find out.

Then Deputy Barstool and Mrs. Erdman burst into the room and raced to their cubicles just before the clock started to chime eight. Mrs. Erdman was dressed in a formal gnomish dress similar to the one she wore yesterday, while Deputy Barstool had finally changed out of her schoolgirl disguise for a simple shirt, vest, and jeans similar to the sheriff's attire.

The sheriff drained the last of her coffee in one gulp. "Just in time! All right, let's get these cases ready for the docket... Miss Mary Jane, we'll handle your probation case first."

The cell door flew open, and Mary Jane floated toward the desk, her buttocks still stuck tight in the flower pot. The sheriff slammed a gavel. "Court is now in session. All rise... Miss Mary Jane, that includes you."

Mary Jane struggled to get on her feet, the pot forcing her to bend over double. “It won’t budge!”

“Deputy Barstool? You’re the parole officer. Help your client.”

With a sigh the deputy grabbed at the pot and started to yank. With a grunt Mary Jane pulled herself free. She discovered her buttocks were caked in soil and had started to sprout roots, like the fingers of a potato. Blushing, Mary Jane brushed off the remaining dirt, and with a few tugs she pulled out the growing roots. “Whoops! Pardon me. Must be going to seed.”

The sheriff eyed the dirt on the ground. “Miss Mary Jane, part of this probationary hearing is to determine whether you’re ready to reenter society as a productive worker. Please avoid leaving your mess around the courtroom.”

Mary Jane stiffened. “Oops, my bad! I’ll… clean it up?”

"We'll leave that to the bailiff. Mrs. Erdman? Get that swept up."

"But I'm playing the role of district attorney today. Someone has to prosecute."

"This is only a routine probation case. Just get your janitor hat and get to sweeping."

Mrs. Erdman pouted, then fetched an orange baseball cap that read "Cleanup Crew."

The sheriff organized her folders. "Miss Mary Jane, since you've made the wise decision to comply with the state and seek rehabilitation, this hearing should be fairly perfunctory. We're simply going to administer the minimum mandatory sentence for possession of a controlled substance, and then you can immediately begin your period of community service. Counsel for the defense, do you have anything to say on your client's behalf before we wrap this up?"

The deputy shrugged. “I reckon the mandatory minimum will learn her pretty good.”

“Learn me what?”

The sheriff slammed her gavel. “Well, that’s good enough for me. Miss Mary Jane, you are ordered to surrender any and all cannabis in your possession to the state. Furthermore, I sentence you to be flogged. You will receive thirty-nine lashes with the cat-o’-nine-tails before beginning your period of community service.”

Mary Jane’s eyes went wide. “What? But I agreed to the plea deal!”

“Exactly. That’s why I’m taking it so easy on you. Missus Erdman, I think we’ll need the hedge clippers for this prisoner.”

As she finished sweeping, Mrs. Erdman’s head popped up, and she quickly doffed her orange hat for a green one that read “Gardener.” Then the

gnome produced what looked like a gigantic pair of rusty scissors.

Mary Jane's pupils shrank to the size of pinpricks. "What are you gonna do with that?"

The sheriff snapped her fingers. "We have to confiscate your raw marijuana, of course."

A floating chair slapped lightly against Mary Jane's rump, forcing her to sit. Then Mrs. Erdman approached, testing the clippers. Mary Jane stamped her feet. "But I love my natural hair! You can't do this to me! I took the plea deal! ...*Ow!* Hot! Hot seat! Too hot!"

Mary Jane heard another *snap*, and suddenly the seat she was sitting on turned mad hot. Mary Jane howled and tried to stand, but her bottom was stuck flat to the burning chair. The sheriff looked her right in the eyes. "Miss Jane, you agreed to plead guilty of your own free will. This is part of that deal, of course. Resisting a lawful order will only

earn you additional charges. If you say you want to be good, then be a good girl and sit still."

Mary Jane howled as she felt her buttocks start to sizzle. "Okay, okay, okaaaaay! I'll be good and stuff!"

Instantly the hot surface of the chair cooled, and Mary Jane slumped in her seat. As she felt her wrists being restrained, Mary Jane started to snivel. Standing on a stool, Mrs. Erdman carefully clipped off every stalk of raw hemp that covered Mary Jane's head. Then she used a smaller pair of bonsai trimmers to clean off the rest, leaving Mary Jane with a smooth, shaved head. Sticky, syrupy tears appeared in Mary Jane's eyes, exactly like golden tree sap.

Deputy Barstool took a close look at Mary Jane's thighs. "Hmm, better check her crevices for hidden contraband, just to be safe."

Slowly Mary Jane's ankles were pulled apart and secured against the legs of the stool. Sure enough, her unshaven bush was composed entirely of small floral cannabis buds.

By the time her shave was finished, Mary Jane was weeping freely, tears and snot dripping down her face in thick globs.

After the confiscated raw hemp was bagged, the sheriff examined it and put it right in her desk. "All that's left is the mandatory flogging. Deputy Barstool, would you like to do the honors?"

"Don't get me wrong, Sheriff, I'd sure love to whup this brat's butt, but seein' as I'm also her parole officer, wouldn't that constitute a conflict of interest?"

"Eh, just wear the executioner's hood. That way no one knows who you are."

The deputy rubbed her hands together. "Jehoshaphat! Now that's an idea!"

Quickly the deputy threw on a black hood and retrieved a whip. It was fashioned like a martinet, with nine short strips of soft leather, which gave it its famous nickname: the cat-o'-nine-tails.

Mary Jane took one look at it and shook her head wildly, gasping in terror as she was led to the flogging post. The restraining loops hovered in place before securing her fast to the post in a standing position, her back and buttocks exposed.

With practiced precision, Deputy Barstool cracked the martinet across Mary Jane's buttocks.

Feeling a shiver travel up and down her spine, the dryad gasped, then screamed. "*Noooo! Waahaaaaww!! Wheeze Aaauuuugh!*"

Mrs. Erdman groaned. "Ugh. What a crybaby. She's like my youngest throwing a temper tantrum. She does look like a baby with her bald head and all."

The deputy cracked the whip with a practice swing of her arm. “Well, I’ll give this big baby a reason to cry soon enough!”

Ignoring her victim’s screech, Deputy Barstool aimed the next blow at Mary Jane’s upper thighs. The dryad twisted her wrists, straining to break free, but all she could manage was to thrust out her buttocks a few more inches. “*Gyaaaaah! Ahgck!*”

Sheriff Humblehand watched the deputy deliver the next few strokes and shook her head. “Deputy, try to aim a few across the prisoner’s back and shoulders. This is supposed to be a whippin’, not a spankin’.”

The deputy stood on her tiptoes and aimed the next stroke high, but only managed to reach the top of Mary Jane’s buttocks. “I can’t reach no higher, sheriff.”

The sheriff hopped off her chair and stomped around her desk. “Oh, land sakes! Just let me show you how it’s done.”

Mary Jane twisted against the leather tongs, her hips swaying back and forth as she looked over either of her shoulders. “Wait! There has to be another way!”

She saw the sheriff rolling a wooden barrel toward her. The sheriff set the barrel down firmly right in front of the whipping post and glared at Mary Jane. “Gonna try and bribe your way out of punishment again?”

Mary Jane tensed. “No, ma’am!”

The sheriff sniffed, then climbed on top of the barrel. “That’s more like it. Deputy, no offense, but those limp-wristed swings of yours really shouldn’t count toward the total.”

Then the sheriff raised the cat-o’-nine-tails high. “So we’d best start this whuppin’ over from the

beginning. It's got to be done right. Now, watch close."

Mary Jane bared her fangs. "What? That's unfair!"

Then the sheriff delivered the first stroke across the back of Mary Jane's left shoulder.

Mary Jane yelped. Sure, it stung like mad, but as she tried to process the sensation, she was surprised to discover that it wasn't as bad as she had expected. She had imagined the whip would rip out a chunk of her flesh with each blow. Then the welts started to rise across her shoulder, and Mary Jane sucked down a breath. The ache washed over her like a crashing wave, far worse than the initial sting. "*Eeep!*"

The sheriff switched her grip on the martinet, aiming at Mary Jane's right shoulder. "Miss Jane, did I hear you object that that was bein' unfair to you? That's mighty hurtful. I've been elected by the good folks of Cobywood to represent them as their

justice of the peace. If you've got an accusation to make, let's hear it."

Mary Jane gritted her teeth, her eyes blazing. Her anger was so hot her tears momentarily evaporated. "This is completely arbitrary! I want justice, do you hear me? Give me justice!"

"Justice? And what's justice?"

"Let me go, for Gaia's sake!"

Sheriff Humblehand landed her second stroke across Mary Jane's right shoulder. The dryad inhaled sharply but fought to swallow her scream. Feeling her bald scalp burning, Mary Jane flashed a defiant look at her tormentor.

The sheriff didn't blink. "Let you go? So you can sell more drugs in our little town? The folks here voted on legalizing marijuana. It got rejected at the ballot. Don't like the laws we've passed in our home? Too bad. Go smoke your weed somewhere else."

Mary Jane rolled her eyes and puffed. “Hmmph. I never get high off my own stash. Duh, do you think I’m a brain-addled—*Yeeeow!*”

The sheriff surprised Mary Jane with a third *lash* across her buttocks. “But you didn’t do the sensible thing, did you? You decided that what our cozy, folksy, friendly little corner of this rotten world needed was a drug hustler.”

Feeling her tears starting to return, Mary Jane held her eyes wide open, willing them to go away. “Justice! I demand justice!”

“So be it. Here’s your justice.”

Then Sheriff Humblehand landed a ferocious *lash* across Mary Jane’s right shoulder before using a fluid twist of her arm to deliver the second stroke in quick succession across her victim’s left shoulder.

Mary Jane screeched, squirming against the post, completely unable to process what was happening around her.

With a detached, academic look on her face, the sheriff gestured at the blazing marks left by the last two strokes. “You want a good thirteen strokes ’cross both her shoulders, then spread out the last thirteen along her ass and thighs. Stay away from the lower back. That’s where the kidneys are. The soft leather shouldn’t do more than leave welts, but no sense risking a lawsuit.”

“I don’t think dryads have kidneys,” interjected Mrs. Erdman.

“Really? Is that true, Miss Jane?”

Mary Jane gasped for breath. She wanted to scream for mercy, but she was still too pissed. Calming her rapid breathing, Mary Jane tried to force her voice to sound casual. “Uh... huh? We don’t have all those weird internal organs you need. We use photosynthesis for nourishment.”

The deputy slapped her knee. “Ah, haw! Jus’ like a tree!”

As she felt the cool air tickle the back of her bald scalp, Mary Jane shivered and suddenly second-guessed herself. Quickly she shook her head. "Oh no! Not like a tree at all! I'm an herbaceous dryad. My skin is very sensitive to heat and abrasions! Please, Miss Sheriff, don't spank me any—"

Masterfully the sheriff landed the next two strokes across the dryad's buttocks in quick succession, then aimed a third across her victim's lower back.

And with that, Mary Jane lost any ability to pretend toughness. She squealed like a piglet before the sheriff began to deliver whip strokes at a slow, steady pace.

The sheriff spaced out the next few lashes evenly, making sure to cover the dryad's lower back now that she was sure there was no risk of injuring any organs.

After thirteen strokes, Mary Jane yelled loud and long, pulling at the leather straps as if trying to climb away. "*Nooo! No more! Mercy!*"

The sheriff aimed the next stroke between her victim's shoulder blades at a perfectly vertical, downward angle. The dryad screeched in terror before something strange happened. The cumulative effect of the pain actually snapped Mary Jane out of her state of panic. Suddenly, and all at once, she became vividly aware, perfectly awake. Mary Jane felt the stripes across her back and buttocks like paint strokes perfectly covering the canvas of her flesh. And at that moment the spoiled dryad finally learned what it was to be helpless. To be on display. To be an object.

The sheriff's voice was cold. "Mercy? Sorry, Miss Jane, but you asked for justice. And you deserve to get it, good n' hard."

Slowly Sheriff Humblehand began to mete out the next set of thirteen strokes, silently, precisely, professionally.

Having now reached a heightened state of consciousness, Mary Jane's head was dizzy from the sensation. It hurt, of course. But now not even her fear could protect her anymore. She simply hurt more and more and more. It wasn't merely painful. It was as if Mary Jane's entire world had simply become pain itself.

This lasted until the last of the second set of strokes. Mary Jane tried to scream. She wanted to scream. But she couldn't find her voice. Then she noticed her throat hurt, the sting as bad as anything she could feel behind her. More pain. The world was already pain, and here was another little bit of hurt.

As she felt the next *lash*, Mary Jane squeaked like a mouse, then slumped forward, dangling limply from the restraints that held her to the post.

The sheriff nodded, then climbed off the barrel to aim the next three strokes across the dryad's lower buttocks and thighs.

Mary Jane clung weakly to the post, grunting with exhaustion.

"You're doing better, Miss Jane. Seems we've spanked the devil outta you, mostly. But there's still nine more to go. Let's give your thighs some attention. We're gonna get 'em to match your heinie. Now, you've promised to be a good girl. If your word means anything, then stick out your bottom, little missy."

As she registered the meaning of the words, Mary Jane whimpered, then arched her back to present her buttocks and thighs as a target. The sheriff wasted no time and aimed two lightning-quick strokes across each of her victim's butt cheeks.

Shivering, Mary Jane simply absorbed the rest of her beating. She managed to hold her bottom high

for another four strokes before her knees shook and gave out beneath her.

Her bald head hung limply to the side before an especially harsh stroke snapped Mary Jane out of her stupor. She writhed once, then slumped like a ragdoll, wheezing, her head lolling to the other side.

Sheriff Humblehand sighed. "And you were doing so well. Try again. Bottoms up, Miss Jane."

Feeling spit and snot and tears dripping down her face, Mary Jane planted her feet like tree roots and stuck out her ass. Her abs were aching from the exertion, like the burn after a long workout. *Oh, look, another part of my body that hurts!* thought Mary Jane dully.

Finally the sheriff administered the last two strokes with the same blinding double-swing technique. Mary Jane stood silently, her stance steady, and considered the quality of the mounting pain left by the last two lashes. Coldly Mary Jane concluded

that the sheriff must have saved her absolute best for last. Her back and buttocks had gone numb long ago, but now it was like the pain was reaching deeper into her, past muscles, into her soul. Mary Jane had to appreciate the art of it. Then she screamed, her voice like gravel.

The sheriff stood back to admire her work and whistled. “Phew! Now that’s a fine set of stripes, if I do say so myself. Nice and even! Deputy Barstool, you may remit Miss Jane to custody for the night. She’ll need plenty of rest ’fore tomorrow.”

Dimly Mary Jane felt the loops go slack, releasing her from the whipping post, before an invisible hand scooped her up by the stomach and stuffed her back into the flower pot, ass first.

Just as Mary Jane was set down inside the cell, Bat-Mahlat floated into the air next to her and started drifting toward the desk. The succubus flailed wildly in midair, nearly breaking free of the two dildos before they seemed to spark to life and

press deeper into her. "Hey! *Ow!* Lemme go! *Yeeowch!* That smarts! Don't make me move while these things are still stuffed inside—"

The gourd popped out of Bat-Mahlat's ass before she was slapped down roughly onto her chair, then bound in place. She gasped, drooling, as the purple dildo started to work on her groin in earnest again. "*Yeeeeeesh! Oh, yesss*—I mean—*No! No more!*"

The chair landed in front of the desk with a *bump*. Sheriff Humblehand pulled out a file marked with Bat-Mahlat's prisoner number. "All right, now we can finally get to the matter of your previous contempt-of-court charge. Do you have anything to say in your defense?"

The succubus gurgled past frothy drool, a spit bubble dangling from her lip. "I want a lawyer."

"We've been over this, Miss Bat-Mahlat. The court has already provided you with a lawyer."

"I want a real lawyer, and I want a jury of my peers."

"You've already been found guilty according to our legal system. Really, all that's left to handle is the penalty for your contempt of court. Do you have anything to say in your defense?"

"Bite me."

"'Fraid that's another contempt-of-court charge."

The sheriff opened a drawer on her desk, and ten small mousetraps floated into the air. Bat-Mahlat looked confused before she lightly floated into the air. "What are those—*aw, fuck!*"

Two of the mousetraps landed on the seat of her chair and sprang back to arm themselves. The succubus' eyes boggled as she slowly started to sink back down, then reached behind to shield her bottom. "No, no, no! This is insane! This is completely—"

The moment she reached back, two mousetraps flew to intercept her hands. With two *snaps* her fingers were caught in each of the mousetraps. She squealed and shook her hands wildly before suddenly remembering what was coming up from behind her.

As the succubus' plump bottom squished against the two mousetraps, the triggers squeezed dangerously and—

KA-SNAP!

Each mousetrap clamped down firmly, biting deep into each of the succubus' fleshy butt cheeks. The succubus howled and jumped into the air, but the moment her feet landed on the ground her toes were caught in another pair of mousetraps. "*Eeee-yaaaaargh!*"

The succubus danced in place, then bent over to try and free her feet, only to notice her hands were still trapped. The moment she bent over, her devilish

pronged tail flicked wildly back and forth, just like a mouse in distress.

Then a mousetrap caught the tip of her tail, and the succubus jumped straight into the air. The magic seemed to catch her, letting her dangle in place. "No! Not my precious tail! It's sensitive! You pinching my tail is like me pinching your tits in a vice!"

Then two mousetraps flew toward the succubus' exposed tits and clamped down firmly on each of them. The succubus screamed until her voice cracked, then gasped for air. "Is that all you've got? I've done kinkier shit for film-school homework!"

The last mousetrap fluttered up in front of her face. Then, almost casually, it pressed against the end of her nose and sprung. The succubus writhed wildly, the traps all flopping along with her, but her scream was slightly muffled thanks to her nose being pinched. "*Waaaauuughffff!*"

The sheriff clapped her hands. “We’ll try again tomorrow, shall we?”

As the succubus started floating toward the cell, she started kicking again. “Eff yoo! I’ll soo’ your whole department, then I’ll soo’ each of you personally, and your families too!”

Then the succubus landed a hard kick against the wall at the back of the cell. There was a sharp *bump*, and the entire back wall jostled loose.

Both of the prisoners blinked. Mary Jane writhed in her flower pot, but her buttocks were stuck tight. “What was—”

Then the wall of the cell fell backwards, crumpling into a heap of foam and Styrofoam chunks as it smashed over the heads of a hidden film crew. A group of halfling camera operators spluttered as they struggled to free themselves from under giant pieces of fake wall.

At the main camera, two tall young women stood clutching one another in horror. One was tan with lanky dust-gray hair, who was operating the mic, while the other was slender and pale with sleek black hair, who was seated on a director's chair.

Mary Jane blinked twice, then finally recognized them. The gray-haired woman was clearly the she-werewolf, though without her canine snout. She was wearing an orange jumpsuit with a prisoner number. The pale, white-skinned woman was the vampiress, though she had lost the pallid, grayish hue from the TV show. The vampiress was wearing a neon-yellow vest that was labeled "Community Service Volunteer," along with a red French beret.

Bat-Mahlat gasped. "Ossy? Carmy? What are yoo' two idiots doing? Are you... filming us? You fuck'n traitors! Did you ungrateful mooks turn stool pigeon on me?"

The two women started bawling. The gray-haired one had sharp canines. "I'm sorry, boss! They

threatened to give us shots if we didn't help them set up a new film shoot! They were gonna cure my lycanthropy!"

"You bone-headed, dumb-ass, bitch vamps! I told you to demand a lawyer!"

The she-werewolf snarled. "I did exactly what you said, boss! I kept biting and scratching and barking for a lawyer, but they said I was found guilty of assault and battery on an officer and put me in a dog kennel!"

"If they slapped you in the clink, then why are you filming us?"

The werewolf-woman cocked her head, exactly like a confused puppy. "Because they said if I was a good girl, they'd let me out for walkies. I need walkies, boss! I can't stay cooped up!"

The black-haired lady bawled. "And they were gonna cure my vampirism if I didn't agree to guest-direct the next episode of *Shire Reaves*! I had

to take the plea deal! We had no choice, boss! If I lose being a vampire, I'd lose my soul again, if I hadn't already!"

One of the halfling cameramen stood, dusting himself off. "Oh, that wasn't part of the plea deal. We gave you your injections while you were out."

The werewolf-girl and the vampire-girl froze before quickly pulling down their panties to inspect their bare bottoms. Sure enough, they both had little circular Band-Aids that marked where they'd been given their shots. Both girls started to cry at once.

The ex-vampire-girl screeched. "*Waaah!* But I don't wanna be a normie! Boo hoo!"

The ex-werewolf-girl howled, then snarled. "*Awooo!* Do you have any idea how much it costs to get reinfected?"

Bat-Mahlat started to swear before the two dildos started penetrating her again, and she choked. "*Ooooh... Ugh!* You want to violate my rights? Fine!

Do it harder! *Ha... harder, harder—haaa-ha-aaaauwgh!*"

Mary Jane's jaw dropped in horror as she took in the scene. "Lights... cameras... TV screens... you've been filming us this whole time?"

As if in answer, the theme song for *Shire Reaves* started playing from one of the TVs in the editing station, and Mary Jane recognized herself on the screen. The narrator's voice started to play over the rough footage. "Tonight, while the department's still dealing with the most contemptible perp to ever catch a contempt-of-court charge, there's a new troublemaker in Cobywood: a brain-addled stoner who thinks she can sling drugs to our innocent local youth. That's right, folks! She sells weed! Remember, kids, it's the gateway drug! But once the short arm of the law catches up to her, this pot-head's ass is grass!"

The TV footage cut to show Mary Jane being stuffed butt-first into a pot. Mary Jane rocked

wildly back and forth inside her pot. "No! All the dudes in my artists' collective watch this show! We enjoy it ironically!"

The sheriff groaned. "Good grief, can we get a screen up? It's impossible to keep the prisoners' attention focused on paying their debt to society with you clowns interrupting."

Mary Jane tipped over and twisted to face the sheriff, her ass stuck high in the air as she crawled on her hands and knees to reach the bars of the cell. "You can't air this! I never consented to be filmed!"

Mrs. Erdman held up a form. "Sure you did. It was part of the terms for the waiver when you signed up for that geeky artists' alley thing. Didn't you read the terms and conditions carefully?"

"*Noooooo!*" wailed Mary Jane.

"*Yessss! Oh, yes, yes, yeeeeeeeeesss!*" moaned Bat-Mahlat.

Sheriff Humblehand clicked a pen. “Now, let’s look for some noble causes that Miss Jane can volunteer for as part of her community service.”

***

After a long, hard week, Mary Jane and Bat-Mahlat were finally summoned for another case review.

Sheriff Humblehand smiled as she looked over her clipboard. “I must admit, Miss Jane, you’ve been a model prisoner. Once you’ve finished your term of community service, I’ll be happy to recommend you for early release in recognition of your good behavior.”

Mary Jane smiled sweetly and bowed her head. She was wearing a clean, baggy orange jumpsuit. “Thank you, ma’am. I just can’t wait to become a productive and contributing member of society.”

“As for you, Miss Bat-Mahlat… well, looks like we’ve finally caught up on your last few contempt-of-court charges. Who knows, maybe we

can actually get this case wrapped up. Where were we? Ah, yes, sentencing. Do you have anything to say for yourself before I pronounce sentence?"

Bat-Mahlat smiled weakly, staring vacantly at the judge as the two dildos continued to pleasure her. "Mmm... I maintain my innocence. Pornographic films are protected speech, and I will not apologize for producing them."

The sheriff buried her face in her palm. "Miss Bat-Mahlat, that's never been the issue. If you had simply applied to the local government for a business license, you could film whatever you want, so long as it's legal."

Bat-Mahlat took a deep, shuddering breath. "All that's... *oooh*... controlled by the Triple-X Performers' Bardic Guild. We're already compliant with all their regulations."

"Then just go to the county clerk and get your business license! Why is this hard?"

The succubus pouted. “But the marketing department said—”

“Who runs your business? You, or your marketing department?”

“... *Meeee?*”

“Then you’re the one who’s responsible for the decision, aren’t you, Miss Bat-Mahlat?”

The succubus hung her head. “Yes, I’m... I’m sorry.”

The sheriff beamed. “Very good. In that case, I hereby sentence you to pay a fine of ten gils for improper compliance and order you to march your naughty little tail straight to the clerk’s office to get your business license in order. You’re free to go.”

The two dildos pulled free from the succubus’ orifices and floated over to settle themselves in the dishwasher. The succubus blinked. “Wait... that’s it?”

The sheriff held up her hands. “Of course that’s it! It’s not like we’re going to throw the book at you over a minor licensing violation. Now...”

As the sheriff snapped her fingers, the succubus floated into the air. “... Off with you, you adorable, little, silly-headed libertarian, you.”

The office door popped open, and the succubus was set on her feet outside. Bat-Mahlat glanced down at her fully nude body. “But what about my shoes and—”

The door slammed shut.

The sheriff sighed with contentment. “Finally! I thought that case would never end. Now, Miss Jane, although I’m very happy with your progress, I’m recommending at least another week of community service. If you work hard, I’m sure you’ll be able to repay your debt to society in that time.”

Mary Jane froze, then balled her hands into fists. "What? But I've done every effin' thing you said, right from the start! How am I not getting released first?"

"You mean Miss Bat-Mahlat? Oh, Miss Jane, you pled guilty to a completely different crime. A felony, for that matter. Of course, you did volunteer to perform community service, so you're only getting probation. Once I'm sure you won't recidivate, you'll be free to go. But your attitude ain't doing much to help your case, missy."

"What attitude? I had a frickin' great attitude! I obeyed! I cleaned the cell! I volunteered at the soup kitchen! I filmed the cheesy 'Don't Do Drugs, Kids!' spot! What more do you fucking want?"

"What I want, Miss Jane, is to know that you are truly sorry. Take Miss Bat-Mahlat for instance. She clearly isn't afraid of punishment. So when she says she's sorry, I know she really means it. You, on the

other hand, are completely terrified of pain and humiliation, aren't you?"

"Well, of course I am! Who the hell wouldn't be scared of getting their ass beat constantly, mercilessly?"

The sheriff nodded. "Exactly. Therefore, when you promise to be good and swear you'll never sell drugs in my town again, I can't quite be sure if you're telling the truth. Maybe you're just saying what you think I want to hear to avoid punishment, rather than out of genuine contrition."

"What? Then how the fuck am I supposed to ever get out of here?"

"You can start by watching your language."

Mary Jane ripped the buttons off her orange jumpsuit, then started to stumble out of her pants. "Well, screw this! And fuck you! I want a lawyer!"

The sheriff sighed, then snapped her fingers. "Contempt of court. Mrs. Erdman? Start the dishwasher running. I have a feeling we'll be needing the interrogation tools for Miss Jane before the week is over."

Mary Jane floated in midair, her orange pants tangled around her ankles as she kicked and punched at nothing. Then a long, hefty wooden paddle, complete with little drilled holes to cut down on air resistance, flew off its hook and hovered behind Mary Jane, patting her upturned rump.

Mary Jane's eyes went wide as she felt the warning love-taps. "I want a lawyer! Lawyer, lawyer, law—"

The paddle slammed down hard across Mary Jane's buttocks with such force that it pressed her glutes flat and left little circular impressions all along her mottled, scorched flesh. Mary Jane screeched like a banshee.

But thankfully, since she was only a dryad, no one died as a result.

***

Bat-Mahlat slammed her fist against the door of the sheriff's office before noticing the watchful eyes of all the film crew for *Shire Reaves* standing behind her. The succubus took a deep breath. "You know what? Fine!"

Then she started strutting, fully nude, past them. Cammy, the cured vampire-girl, and Ossy, the cured werewolf-girl, hustled after her, clutching hand cams.

Ossy was panting so hard her tongue was lolling. "Boss? We're not fired, are we?"

Cammy swallowed, then forced a smile. "Yeah, you can't stay sore at us, boss. We were in a real pickle."

"You're not fired, and I will stay sore at you for as long as I see fit. You two are going to be filming

hardcore vampire-slash-werewolf spanking scenes for the next year... on both sides of the camera. Maybe then I'll be inclined to let bygones be bygones."

"But boss, I ain't a werewolf girl anymore. They stuck something pokey in my butt!"

"Yeah, they cured us without asking. I complied and everything, but it didn't even matter! And we can't get good traction from werewolf and vampire fetishists without authentic casting."

"Then they gave me rabies shots, boss! It was a great big needle, right in my—"

Then Ossy froze as the collar around her neck started to buzz and click, flashing a red light. The ex-werewolf-woman dropped to the ground, twitching, before two members of the halfling camera crew appeared. One attached a leash to the collar around Ossy's neck. "Hey! You can't bring the dog past the invisible fence, you morons! Even if

we let her out for volunteer service duty, she's still serving her sentence for assault and battery."

Cammy watched her friend twitching on the ground and slowly pointed at herself. "Um... what about me? Am I allowed to go?"

"Yeah, yeah, you're on candid-camera duty, so you're free to walk around the town. Just keep your ankle brace on and don't leave the city limits for the time being. Make sure you get a good, steady shot of everything. We may need it for the B-roll."

Bat-Mahlat and Cammy watched as the halflings led the whimpering ex-werewolf away.

Finally Cammy looked at her boss and giggled nervously.

Bat-Mahlat sniffed. "I guess being a rat fink has its perks."

"Oh, come on, boss. I'll make it up to you! Just think of the free publicity our studio will get from this little... adventure?"

Bat-Mahlat flicked her fingers, and with a puff of red flame a smoky black business card appeared in her hand. "We'll get you and Ossy reinfected later... preferably when we're not surrounded by halflings. For now, keep filming that jail cell. And if you get a chance, give that dryad my card. Tell her I think she has a future as a movie star."

Cammy beamed. "Wow, boss, you're really ready to get back into the game? After all you've been through? I had no idea you were built that tough!"

Bat-Mahlat felt the hemorrhoids on her anus sting, and puckered her butthole. Remembering the lingering ache in her pussy, the succubus lightly covered her front, looking almost shy for a moment before remembering herself. Putting her hands on her hips, the succubus stuck out her chest, posing

majestically with nipples fully erect. “Bah! That was nothing. They can’t threaten me with a good time!”

Cammy’s eyes shone with admiration before she took a second look at the business card and stared at it stupidly. “But... boss, I’m supposed to follow you for the rest of the day. What am I supposed to do with this?”

“Bat-brain! Just do it while you’re filming the dryad, of course. And yes, I think I would like someone to follow me around today. Unfortunately we’ve lost Ossy for the time being, so that can only mean one thing...”

Bat-Mahlat snapped her fingers, and a spiked dog collar appeared in a puff of black smoke, dangling from her hand. “... You’ll just have to be my dog for the day, won’t you, Cammy?”

The little blood that had returned to Cammy’s face paled as she eyed the collar. “But, boss... you know I hate playing the sub role.”

"Exactly. This is step one in your long, hard journey of redemption before you'll be allowed back into my good graces. Now, what will it be, Cammy?"

Cammy glanced at the crowd of plain halflings surrounding them, watching the scene unfold in befuddled silence. Then Cammy blushed mad red, probably for the first time in at least a hundred years. "Yes, mistress. I'll be a good girl."

Bat-Mahlat attached the collar to the shame-faced ex-vampire, then glanced at the stunned crowd watching them. "Now, if you'll excuse us... I have a business zoning license to apply for!"

Bat-Mahlat strolled out the front door and down the street, ignoring the astonished halflings on all sides.

***

In the sheriff's office, Sheriff Humblehand, Deputy Barstool, and Mrs. Erdman were doing paperwork,

calmly ignoring the plight of the dryad floating in the air above them.

Mary Jane's howling and wailing slowly melted into bawling and blubbering. She dug her fingers into her bald scalp and seethed, before the endless strokes from the paddle broke the last of her resolve, and she lay limp in midair.

Finally Sheriff Humblehand looked up and sighed. "Poor dear, let's put her to bed."

The sheriff snapped her fingers, and the dryad flopped down into her flower pot, face first. Mary Jane whimpered as she tried to hold her bald head up high, shaking her fist. "Nooo! I don't deserve this! I'm a good person! What do you fucking care if I sling weed?"

Then Mary Jane was cut off as the magic pressed her firmly down in place, with only her ass poking up out of the pot. From within the pot came a muffled roar of rage. "*Mrrraaaaahff!*"

“Aren’t you worried she’ll suffocate?” asked Mrs. Erdman.

The sheriff waved a hand. “Not to worry. Dryads breathe through their skin. Which reminds me.”

With a snap of her fingers, the sheriff reactivated the paddle, which immediately went to work on Mary Jane’s upturned backside. The pot rocked back and forth wildly, and as the exposed buttocks shivered, the muffled screams within the pot quickly grew more desperate.

The deputy looked at the sheriff skeptically. “But Sheriff, we’re not really going to let that succubus set up a smut studio in our fair town, are we?”

“Hold your horses, Deputy. I told her that she needed to get a proper license. That’s true enough.”

The sheriff drummed her fingers together. “Of course, them forms are mighty complicated. It’s all too easy to miss a signature, or file it with the wrong

office. In which case, our friend the succubus... will still be non-compliant."

"You think she'll get the hint after another week in the clink?"

"Hopefully. But who knows, maybe she's starting to like it here."

In her pot, Mary Jane let out a final sob, then stopped struggling, lifting her aching bottom high in a final, desperate attempt to endure her paddling.

And then a final thought occurred to Mary Jane. ... *I am an ass.*

She might as well be nothing but her buttocks. She existed to be spanked.

This was her life now.

And with that, Mary Jane's last attempt to rationally process what was happening to her fizzled out.

Sheriff Humblehand snapped her fingers, and the paddle paused mid-swing.

Approaching the flower pot, the sheriff patted the upturned buttocks in a manner that was almost, but not quite, gentle. “Now, let’s see if our friend the flower child is ready to be more reasonable.”

The End

The Breaking of Princess Alesia

By Yu May and JezebethNoir

Queen Deruella yawned as her handmaiden, Marika, read out the lengthy list of her titles to the captive prisoner. The art and architecture of the throne room was reminiscent of the Sumerian palaces of legend. Two skeletal, undead guards stood on either side of the throne, wielding khepesh swords. Apart from the animated corpses, the only other armed guards were handmaidens, wielding short swords and bucklers (a one-handed shield). A harem of the Queen's handmaidens knelt at the sides of the chamber. Two beauties were collared and chained on either side of the throne room. In the open courtyard just outside the throne room, one could faintly make out the cries of a young woman as she was suspended by a pole over a low fire, her buttocks nearly touching the hot irons

below her. Queen Deruella's appetite for female slaves was already legendary, but when foreigners visited her palace, the reality always surpassed their expectations.

Queen Deruella wore a heavy golden crown, along with a gossamer dress of black silk, which complemented the silvery hair she styled in two long tails.

In sharp contrast to the Queen, a pink-haired prisoner was standing tall and proud before the throne, despite being stark naked, except for a silver laurel crown that marked her as a Princess of the human city-state of Selune.

Marika gestured to the prisoner. "Kneel, prisoner! You stand in the Divine Presence of Deruella, Queen of the Great City Seramia, Beloved of the Gods, High Queen of all the Khemshara, Mistress of the Desert, Ruler of—"

Deruella waved a hand. “There’s no need to list every province we rule, silly girl. Just get on with it.”

Marika blushed. “Yes, your majesty. Presenting Alesia, formerly a Princess of Selune...Psst, kneel, you bitch! You’re making me look bad!”

Marika quickly snapped her staff across Alesia’s backside, but the princess stood firm.

Deruella’s voice snapped with cold authority. “Marika, did I give you leave to strike the prisoner?”

Marika stiffened, then immediately kowtowed, her pale gold hair spilling across the floor. “Please forgive me, mistress, for I have committed a great crime! Please punish me!”

Deruella answered with only a nod and a soft hum. “Hmmm?”

Marika gulped audibly and continued her abject apology. “It should be by your glorious hand alone that this slave be stripped and punished, for she is

your trophy, mistress! I have overstepped myself. So, please punish me, severely!"

Deruella waved to two of the lesser handmaidens that guarded the entrance. "You two, escort the prisoner to our torture chamber. Make sure she is properly restrained."

The two nameless handmaidens promptly shackled Alesia, before hogtying her and carrying her away like a piglet for roasting, as dictated by Queen Deruella's rules of courtly etiquette.

As the doors closed behind them, Deruella turned her attention to Marika. She was bowing her head so low, her shivering bottom was poking high in the air behind her. Deruella smiled. "You have done well, Marika...You shall be our First Bride from now on...for you have pleased us greatly."

Marika peeked up from the floor. "Really? So you're not going to punish me?"

Deruella sighed and dropped her courtly voice. "Don't be silly. Of course I'm going to punish you. Go await me in my bedchamber, and prepare yourself for the lash. You are dismissed."

Marika slapped her forehead back down on the floor again. "Yes, Mistress!"

Then Marika crawled on her hands and knees toward the Queen's bedchamber.

***

Queen Deruella reflected on the intricacies of Imperial politics as she descended the spiral staircase. The torture chamber was a series of isolated rooms along a long hallway, all dimly lit and masoned with cool, white stone. Unlike a dungeon, it was kept immaculately clean. After all, the torture chamber was intended for honored guests, not common criminals.

When Deruella entered, Princess Alesia spun on her heels to face her, still hogtied. "So, you've come at

last, Vampire. But I do not fear you. You may kill me, you may torture me, but you shall never conquer my spirit, demon, for I will never betray my city!"

"No need to be so dramatic. You're not the heroine in one of those traveling carnival plays."

Princess Alesia stuck her nose in the air. "Do whatever you will with me! I will not break!"

"Whatever I want? Very well, I shall do whatever I want with you. But perhaps you do not know what you are asking. Handmaidens, show her!"

As they opened the door and entered the hallway, a woman's scream echoed from behind the stone walls. Alesia felt a chill travel down her spine, and her bare nipples went stiff.

Queen Deruella gestured through the barred window of each door in turn as they traversed the hallway. She made sure to give her prisoner enough

time to get a good look at each and every victim housed within.

"This room holds a flogging post. A simple whipping with the cat-o'-nine-tails can break the skin, but a true scourging, with the flagellum, will tear away every inch of flesh, until your very organs are exposed..."

Alesia saw a woman her own age, trussed up against the post, her bare back and buttocks covered with bleeding stripes.

Queen Deruella smirked. "She was once a duchess, but when she visited my court, she only bobbed her head, when a proper bow was called for. A simple lesson in humility is all that is needed, so I will spare her life. She will be allowed to serve me as my slave, once she learns to bow properly."

Alesia tried to put on a stoic face, but her eyes betrayed her true fear. "You seek to frighten me with words? Our people are trained from birth to

endure long suffering. And even if my mind and body should be broken, my spirit will always remain my own! Do your worst, monster!"

Queen Deruella smiled softly. "Very well...in that case I will show you 'my worst'! Next is the rack. With each turn of the wheel, it pulls the length of a hair's breadth. It will take months of work before your limbs are torn from your body...this woman was my chief treasurer. But she tried to use clever tricks to hide the state of my finances, stretching my treasury thin to enrich herself. Now she will be the one stretched thin."

The next room seemingly contained nothing but a statue of a bull, cast in brass. "This is the brazen bull. The inside is hollow, and you will be stuffed inside, naked. A low fire is lit beneath it, not hot enough to kill, but soon enough, the metal grows hot enough to sear the flesh. And when you begin to wail with agony, the pipes will sound with sweet music..."

There was a warbling cry, and the brazen bull's nostrils billowed with steam, accompanied by the sound of tinkling bells. "She was a general who displayed personal cowardice. Now she will learn the meaning of endurance."

Deruella pointed to the next window, where a moaning woman was tied to a chair suspended above a steaming, bubbling cauldron. As the chair was lowered by a lever to dunk the woman into the cauldron, she moaned and gurgled. "This cauldron contains a healing potion, meant to soothe and rejuvenate the skin, even as the fire burns your flesh away. Victims tend to go mad long before they die...The woman was an accomplished court magician, who developed the formula for me. But we caught her trying to flee, stealing the secrets she discovered under my service. Now she will be the first to test her own invention."

Next was a room that seemed normal at first glance, except the air within seemed to ripple with steam. A

weeping woman ran bouncing from one side of the room to the other, gibbering like a baboon. When Alesia glanced down, she noticed the floor was composed entirely of red-hot coals.

"This bed of hot coals will roast your feet, so that you perform a merry dance. But sooner or later, your body will grow tired...and you will need to lie down..."

The trapped woman tripped and fell backwards onto her backside. With an ear-splitting screech, she leapt to her feet, clutching the scorched flesh of her buttocks.

"She was a slaver who tried to sell me exotic dancers at an exorbitant price. But the girls she offered me were far too young for such service. So she will learn to dance for me in their stead...You have seen the torments of fire. Next is the water torture. This water wheel is powered by the moat that protects my fortress. When you are tied to it..." As the wheel spun, a choking woman was dunked into the water

below. After a few seconds she emerged out the other side of the pool, spluttering.

"You will be held under water just long enough to draw breath, but never to drown. It will leave no scars. But nevertheless, after a few days and nights, you will pray for death. That woman was a member of my personal guard, who was caught sleeping during her night patrol. If she survives a week of sleepless nights, she will be allowed an opportunity to rest, and to redeem herself in the field of battle. And finally...This is the torment of the breaking wheel. After every bone in your body is broken, your limbs will go soft, like rope. Then you will be tied to the axle of the wheel like a decoration, your broken body acting as a display for my chariot as I take my victory parade through your conquered homelands..."

Alesia nearly gagged as she saw what awaited her in the final room.

Deruella only smiled. “Well, Princess Alesia? Where are your bold words now? Which torment do you choose?”

Deruella let the moment hang, watching her prisoner tremble.

Finally Deruella waved her hand; a hidden door appeared in a shower of shimmering sparks. “Very well, if you cannot choose a torment, then I will simply choose one for you.”

Deruella opened the door and revealed a simple, well-furnished bedroom, with a sturdy wooden chair set in the middle of the floor. “...I shall reserve for you the first, and simplest, of all punishments ever devised by man...Your torment shall be...a spanking!”

Alesia blinked. “A spanking? But that’s only a childish punishment.”

Queen Deruella led Alesia into the room and closed the door behind them. Then she snapped her

fingers, and the ropes that bound Alesia vanished. "Now, now, child. You are of royal blood yourself, and so stand proudly for your people, just as you ought. But your people have defied my authority as Goddess, as a foolish child rebels against her mother. You stand accountable for your people, so therefore, you must pay the price, on their behalf. And since I am a merciful Goddess, I have chosen a fitting penalty for your foolishness: a spanking, right on your naughty little bottom!"

Raising her fists, Alesia grit her teeth. "Do not mock me! A few smacks on the rump is nothing! What is your real plan? Out with it, hag!"

Deruella clicked her tongue. "Tut, tut, tut, young lady. That is not a proper form of address. If you're so convinced you can handle a simple spanking, then be brave and accept what you have coming. I promise it will go easier for you if you choose to obey. Go and kneel on the chair."

Alesia swung a quick series of jabs at the Queen's face, but Deruella's whole body rippled like water as Alesia's fists passed right through her. Deruella dissipated into a wisp of smoke and billowed around Alesia, before reappearing behind her and snatching her wrist. "Gracious! Such a stubborn child. But we'll sort that out in a moment."

As Deruella seated herself on the wooden chair, she tugged Alesia forward by the wrist. Alesia tripped and stumbled across Deruella's lap. Alesia strained to get back up, but Deruella pinned her down tightly with one arm. As Alesia kicked and writhed, she heard a crisp, resounding *clap*. It took a full second before Alesia registered the sting, and realized with a pang of humiliation that, for the first time in her entire life, she had just been spanked.

Alesia snarled, more annoyed than hurt. "*Ow!* What are you doing?"

"Such a simple-minded question. Isn't it obvious? Think carefully, child, and see if the answer strikes

you." Deruella landed a second *spank*, leaving an angry-red handprint that matched the first, one on each of Alesia's pale, rosy buttocks.

Alesia barked with regal authority. "Enough! I am a Princess!"

Deruella raised her hand slowly. "And this is precisely where you belong, under my authority."

With that, Deruella began to spank at a steady pace. Alesia's shouts of protest quickly gave way to incoherent bellows of rage, but she didn't shed so much as a single tear. Finally, Alesia fought to catch her breath and screamed. "Tyrant! The Will of Selune is not so easily broken! You'll see! Whether it takes a single century, or a thousand millennia, we shall break free of your iron fist."

Deruella landed a particularly firm *clap* to silence Alesia's protests. "A wise ruler has no need of an iron fist. Just a firm hand, from time to time. Now,

hold still, and accept correction, oh errant Princess."

Alesia shook her head so wildly, her pink hair went flying. "No! I owe you no allegiance, Witch Queen!"

Deruella patted Alesia's bottom playfully. "And the conqueror owes nothing to the conquered." Without another word, Deruella renewed the spanking. After a few moments of enduring steady *slaps*, Alesia's entire bottom had flushed to a consistent, rosy pink, to match her hair.

Alesia kept trying to argue, but each *clap* was enough to break her concentration. Furious, Alesia tried to clench her jaw and endure silently, determined not to give her tormentor the satisfaction of hearing her cry.

Finally, Deruella paused and stroked Alesia's bottom. "Your little temper tantrum accomplished nothing. You claimed that nothing I could do

would break your noble spirit. And yet, you can't even take a simple spanking with dignity."

As she tried to hold her voice steady, Alesia felt her lip trembling. "I know your sort. You want me to play the part of a frightened, tearful child for your amusement. I will not comply."

"Very well. If you do not obey, then your people will pay the price. For every day you refuse to submit to my will, I will have one of your countrymen brought to the torture chamber, in your place."

Alesia twisted to look at the Queen, her eyes wide. "What? Don't you dare harm my people! If you so much as lay a finger on the lowliest peasant, I'll—"

There was a blur of motion as Deruella brought down her hand, and Alesia choked as she felt the impact. Deruella shook her head. "You are not in a position to do anything for your people. You have no power anymore. Your choice is simple. Obey,

and accept your chastisement properly, or defy me, and allow your people to suffer my doom. If your dignity is so prized, that you value it more than the life of a single peasant, then that is your right, as a Princess. You hold your people's lives in your hands. Perhaps you would prefer to sacrifice them, just to save your precious little backside? So much for the vaunted courage of your people."

Alesia hissed. "You lie! Your treacherous words mean nothing! You'll only wait until I've disgraced myself, then torment my people, regardless!"

Instead of answering with another *spank*, Deruella stroked Alesia's backside teasingly. "And if I did, there would be nothing you could do to stop me. Nevertheless, I give you my word, as Queen, that if you do not submit, willingly, to a spanking, one of your people will suffer torment instead. Choose now."

Alesia slammed her fists against the stone floor. “So be it, I’ll play your game! What would you have of me?”

Deruella stroked Alesia’s back, then stood her back up on her feet. “First, stand up, and fetch me one of the nursery canes from the rack along the wall.”

Alesia took a deep breath, then marched regally to collect a thin willow cane. Though she had never been spanked herself, she had witnessed plenty of canings being administered to the castle staff, so she knew what was expected of her.

After accepting the implement, Deruella tapped the tip of the cane against the chair. “This is a chastisement seat. Kneel on it, and reach around the back to hold yourself steady. It’s more than sturdy enough to support your weight, but you will still have to concentrate on maintaining your position…if you don’t care to fall flat on your face.”

Alesia blushed and crawled onto the chair. She flinched as she felt her knees digging into the ornate grooves carved into the wooden seat. Alesia muttered to herself. “What an absurd decoration! What could possibly have possessed the carpenter...to make a seat that no one can comfortably sit in?”

Alesia tensed as she felt Deruella flick the cane against her bottom, followed by a series of soft taps. Deruella smiled. “Judging by the state of your skin, I can tell you’ve never been caned in your life. Not a proper caning, at least. Do I assume correctly?”

Alesia pouted and turned away to tighten her grip on the chair. “What does it matter? You are going to have your way with me no matter what I say!”

“Yes, but a wise mother doesn’t seek to inflict pain on her children, without purpose. A just punishment is always measured out according to what is merited. If you displease me, would I be

within my rights to have one of your people brought here, to die by torture?"

Instantly, forgetting her resolve not to look at the Queen, Alesia twisted to flash a furious look at her enemy. "You have no right to harm my people! Don't you understand? All life is precious, and worthy of respect. What gives you any right to—"

With a precise, well-aimed stroke, Deruella snapped the cane across Alesia's backside. "We will have to see to your education in matters of political theory. By right of conquest, the conqueror could have your homeland burned to ashes, and order the fields to be sown with salt, so that no life could ever prosper there again. But for now, we concern ourselves only with the duties of a naughty young lady of rank, in need of maternal guidance. You agreed to accept a spanking, to save the life of one of your people. Let us say that you go back on your word, and leave your position. Do you plan to back out, now that you've come this far?"

Alesia squeaked as she felt the rising sting from the last stroke, and misty tears watering her vision. She shook her head, pursing her lips to resist the urge to scream. “I am no coward! This pain is nothing!”

Deruella answered with another cane stroke, with such force, it sent Alesia’s whole body rocking forward from the impact. She squealed, and released her grip on the seat, shielding her bottom with one dainty hand. Deruella tapped the cane gently against the open palm of Alesia’s hand. “And yet you have left your position, after only two strokes. That will cost you the life of one of your people. Tomorrow, I shall have you brought here, to witness their torment.”

“No! Please, have mercy!”

“Why should we show mercy on a people, when their own Princess cannot stand fast on their behalf?”

“But I haven’t gone back on my word! Please, I’ll submit!”

“Then why are you still shielding your bottom, like a frightened child?”

Blushing, Alesia pulled her hand away and gripped the seat. Deruella shook her head and delivered three soft taps with the cane. “That was your last warning. If you cover your bottom again, one of your people will die. Now, think carefully. Earlier, I asked you if you had ever been spanked before, and you declined to answer. But, when you are asked a question by a Queen, nothing less than the whole truth will suffice. Would you care to change your answer, now?”

Alesia’s voice was soft as she answered, her back trembling. “I...I have never been spanked before...not once in my entire life...that’s the truth!”

Deruella stroked Alesia’s bottom gently with the cane. “Fortunately for you, that was perfectly

obvious from the beginning. Otherwise, I'd have taken your momentary lapse in resolve as willful defiance. That is why I asked you in the first place. You see, a wise mother must mete out a suitable punishment to her children. Were you more experienced, you might be expected to show perfect submission. For example—"

Deruella landed such a ferocious stroke, the cane raised a thin welt, tracing a long red line which stretched from one side of Alesia's bottom to the other. Alesia wailed, then quickly stifled her cry, before two teardrops spilled down her face. Deruella savored the sound of the girl's voice, and waited until she was sure Alesia was listening. "—you flinched, oh so slightly, at that stroke. That would be unacceptable, from a noble princess..."

As Alesia felt another stroke, landing slightly across the previous set of welts, she hissed, and wriggled her toes, desperate to relieve the burning sting.

"...But for a naughty little child, who has never been spanked before, it is an understandable error. With that in mind, how do you wish to be treated? Like a noble Princess, by the standard of perfection? Or like a naughty child, who has never been spanked before? Answer well, Alesia."

Alesia took a shaky breath. "...If...if I say I'm a Princess, you'll only use that as an excuse to inflict further cruelties on my people."

"How astute! You're not as slow-witted as you first seem. Which means you know what to expect if you do not show proper self-control. What is your answer?"

Alesia dug her fingers into the wooden grips on the back of the chair. "In that case...though I am a Princess, I must ask you to remember that I have never been treated in this manner before, and beg your patience."

"Clever, but you are still trying to evade the question. Do you wish me to treat you with restraint, as I would treat a naughty, spoiled child? Answer clearly."

Alesia resisted the urge to curse her tormenter, before her chest shuddered. "Please...I've never been spanked before...please show mercy."

"Say what you are."

Arching her back, Alesia lifted her bottom slightly to present a clear target. "I am a naughty, spoiled child. Please, spank me if you must, only spare my people!"

As Alesia felt the next stroke of the cane cutting across her lower buttocks like a knife, she gasped, and clutched the back of the seat tight against her bosom.

"Much better. Now, for a foolish child, six strokes of the cane is sufficient for most punishments. You can expect additional strokes for any backtalk, or

any fits of temper. You shall now endure six further strokes with the cane. After you receive each one, I expect you to show proper gratitude, and thank me, with your best manners. Do you understand?"

Alesia scowled, resenting the expectation of politeness far more than the physical pain. "Yes, ma'am."

Deruella slapped Alesia's bottom with her free hand, just enough to remind her of the sting of the previous welts, then bent low to whisper in her ear. "The proper form of address to the divine sovereign is, 'Your Majesty.' Wouldn't you agree?"

Alesia glanced sideways as she struggled to hold still. "...Yes, Your Majesty."

"Thank you. Then we may finally begin your instruction. Prepare yourself, Lady Alesia."

The next stroke caught Alesia off guard, landing across her upper thighs rather than her bottom. She screamed, before remembering her instructions.

Dimly, she recalled overhearing a caning as a child, when one of the palace housemaids was punished for laziness. Automatically, Alesia repeated the same words she remembered the maid saying, while in this position. "One! Thank you, Your Majesty. Please, chastise me further."

The second stroke landed smack across the center of her bottom, cutting into several of the raised welts from before. Alesia howled, then choked as she felt a new, fresh welt rise slowly to join the rest. "*Agh!* Two! Thank you, Your Majesty. Please, chastise me further."

Deruella delivered the next three strokes methodically. Each blow was aimed less than an inch below the previous one, in neat, parallel lines. The color of each mark deepened from a pasty red, to a throbbing, mottled, red-violet.

Alesia gasped and grunted, but managed to count three, then four, then five, minding her manners after each count.

But with a wicked smile, Deruella aimed the final stroke at a diagonal angle, cutting across all five of the previous marks. Alesia screeched, then laid her head down, sobbing. Two tears spilled down either side of her face. As Alesia fought for breath, she forgot her count.

A seventh stroke of the cane snapped Alesia out of her reverie. With a roar, she hopped in place, then lost her grip on the chair and flopped forward. She barely caught herself in time to stop herself from flopping face-first onto the stone floor, her legs dangling stupidly in mid-air atop the chair. Finally, she managed to rasp. “Six! Thank you, Your Majesty. Please, chastise me further.”

“You missed your count, and left your position. For that, I should start over again, from the beginning.”

Alesia shook her head, her tears now flowing freely. “No! No more! I can’t take any more!”

“At the limit of your resolve already? Say the word, and I’ll have a peasant brought here in your place.”

Alesia’s voice cracked, and her eyes grew weepy. “No! Please! Don’t hurt my people! Punish me instead! Forgive me!”

“Oh? Even if that means you must accept another six strokes, if it pleases us?”

“Yes! Please!”

“And another? And another? How long do you think you can last, before you break?”

Alesia sobbed freely. “Please! Have mercy!”

“Have mercy upon you, or upon your people? Choose now.”

As she remembered the various tortures, Alesia’s heart froze. She wanted to be brave. She wanted to say, “Spare my people!” But in that brief moment, her voice faltered, and she changed her answer. “Spare my…s-spare me!”

"Then so be it."

Alesia shivered, twisting to look over her shoulder, her bottom still poking out. "No! I didn't mean it! Don't hurt my people!"

"You made your choice. Stand up, Princess Alesia, and face me."

As Alesia stumbled off the chair, she dropped to her knees, instinctively holding her hands up to plead, before remembering herself. Then she stood straight and tall, sniffling in a vain attempt to conceal her dripping tears.

Queen Deruella smiled, then stroked Alesia gently under her chin. "Just look at you. You thought you were going to be a martyr for your people. A brave, legendary hero, right out of the story books. But after only six strokes with a nursery cane, a childish punishment, you were ready to abandon them. What do you have to say for yourself?"

Alesia shook her head. “It was only a momentary weakness. Please, do not take vengeance on my innocent subjects.”

“None of your people are innocent. You defied our law. Our peace. And now you must face the Queen’s justice...but I am also a mother. You have been a foolish child, but you are not without hope of redemption. You promised to accept a spanking, and I promised not to torment one of your people in your stead. And I will keep my word. As payment for your pains, I will spare the life of one of your subjects.”

Alesia blinked. Then her eyes went wide. “You...you can’t mean...”

Alesia dropped to her knees, grasping the Queen’s heels. “Please! Not that! I’ll do anything!”

Sniveling, Alesia laid her face against Queen Deruella’s feet.

Queen Deruella allowed the Princess of Selune to sob freely at her feet for a few moments. “Our feet are wet. Dry them off.”

With a fluttering breath, Alesia quickly dabbed at the Queen’s feet with her hair, to wipe away the tear drops.

“Stand up, Princess Alesia, and face my doom.”

Shakily, Alesia arose to her feet. Queen Deruella waved her hand, and suddenly Alesia’s bonds reappeared from thin air, wrapping around her like snakes, before binding her arms and ankles.

“My judgment is that you shall face the full wrath of the law. For every single treasonous soul in your kingdom, you shall suffer a separate penalty. This judgment is final.”

Alesia tried to take a breath, only for her clogged nose to force her to snort. She felt like a frightened piglet, destined for slaughter. “...V-very well! Wha...what t-torment awaits me next?”

"Torment? Don't be absurd. There's no need to torture you. I'll simply ask you to stay here, and await my return."

Queen Deruella snapped her fingers, and Alesia's bonds melted into smoke, before reshaping into a simple, virginal, white dress, befitting a small child. Alesia examined her clothing, blinking back the tears that speckled her eyelashes.

Queen Deruella smiled. "This room is yours now, Princess Alesia. You will live under my authority, as my royal ward. And for every single soul who resides in your Kingdom...you shall receive six strokes of the cane. I understand the capital of Selune is over one-hundred-thousand strong, so we will start with one set of strokes per day...until you learn how to submit to a spanking properly, with perfect obedience."

Deruella traced the back of her hand against Alesia's cheek. "Once you have been properly trained, so that you do not disgrace yourself during a spanking,

your people will be gathered, and you will be caned on behalf of ten of your people, then one hundred, and then one thousand. Your entire race shall witness the depths of your humiliation, hear the cries of suffering you endure on their behalf, and learn the price of rebellion. But I have no doubt you will learn to endure it bravely...After all, it doesn't take a monster to break the will of a naughty child..."

Princess Alesia stiffened, before Queen Deruella pulled her into a gentle, tender embrace.

"...All you needed was a strict mother, and the rod of chastisement."

As Alesia struggled to count the sheer number of strokes that awaited her, she began to weep softly, burying her face onto the Queen's shoulder. The Queen patted Alesia's head, like a mother comforting a daughter.

The End

The Decoration

By Yu May and Jezebeth Noir

It was a cool evening in the northern fortress of Queen Deruella. A brown-skinned elven beauty, wearing a form-fitting fishnet top and decorative leather straps that marked her as the Captain of the Guard, led two bare-footed handmaidens into the chamber by leashes attached to their leather collars. The maids were dressed in formal, if somewhat revealing, black and white uniforms, with low-cut tops and miniskirts. They wore shackles on their ankles and wrists, but without chains. The guard unclipped the leather cords that bound them. As the guard spun the maids around, she patted them both on the behinds. With a soft giggle, the two maids bent forward and lifted their skirts. The guard tightened her grip on the two leash cords, eyeing the two bottoms before her. "This entire floor needs to be spotless before Queen Deruella

arrives for the Council of War. And if I find so much as a speck of dust..."

Expertly, the guard snapped the two cords like whips, aiming a *lash* across each of the maids' backsides. "...then woe betide you!"

"*Ooooh!* Yes, yes, yes, Mistress Neviya!" squeaked both of the maids, still holding their position obediently.

Neviya snapped the cords taut between her hands and yawned. "I must admit, you two have finally learned to be submissive housemaids. I had my doubts, but I suppose your training as demon hunters must have instilled you with some discipline."

"Thank you for spanking us, Mistress Neviya," said the first maid, her blue hair bobbing as she nodded assent.

The second maid, with long black hair, twisted to look over her shoulder, bowing her head meekly.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to serve Queen Deruella, even if only as lowly housemaids."

"Then you may stand."

Snickering, the two maids stood and turned, before a woman's shrill cry cut through the air above them. The two maids stiffened at the sight.

Attached to the throne by a chain and collar was a draconid maiden with smoke-colored hair. With a snarl, the dragon-girl exhaled fire which rose to engulf an iron cage that hung above the throne room.

There was another scream, and when the fire dissipated, they saw a tall woman with long blond hair flailing inside the cage. Apart from angry red burn marks, she was otherwise pale-skinned and had a curvy, hourglass figure. As she kicked her heels up to her chest, her breasts bounced with each fluid motion.

The first maid's eyes went wide. She had seen the woman in the cage many times before, but only now did it occur to her how strange it was that she was still alive. "Who is that woman?"

"Oh, just the draconid. She's an amusing pet."

The first maid shook her head. "No! The woman in the cage!"

The second maid blinked. "Oh, yeah, I always wondered what the deal with that was."

Neviya glanced at the cage. The iron bars were now red-hot, and there was the distinct sizzling sound as the woman danced in place, unable to escape. "Oh, that's merely a decoration. You needn't concern yourself with it. Just give it a dusting once in a while."

The first maid looked at the trapped woman with sympathy. "But...why is that woman being roasted alive?"

The second maid stroked her chin. “Hmm, I heard a rumor that she was once a lesser vampire who served under Rusalka, before she defected to our side. Queen Deruella magnanimously forgave her. But at some point, I suppose the poor fool did something or other to displease Queen Deruella—*yeeeek!*”

Neviya pinched both maids by their ears and bent low to whisper. “That thing is a decoration. You are forbidden to speak with it. If you don’t want to earn yourselves a whipping, try to think of that cage as a piece of furniture. If Lady Carmilla catches you speaking to the decoration, it will be more than all our hides are worth. In fact...”

Neviya pulled out a stool and patted her lap. “...I’d better give you two a good drubbing, so you won’t forget. Each of you, get across one of my knees.”

“Yes, mistress!” The two maids bowed and quickly settled themselves into position, bottoms up.

As Neviya began to spank the two mewling maids, she barked with stern authority. “Remember, Queen Deruella’s word is law. You are not to talk to the decorations. In fact, I don’t want you so much as thinking about the decoration. Just dust it off, then right back to your duties. Understood?”

The maids wriggled, twisting their legs and rubbing their feet in a desperate effort to stay obediently in position. “Yes, mistress! Thank you for spanking us!” answered both at once.

Then both maids started to cry softly, though the sweet quality of their voices suggested they were not overly bothered by the spanking. Their adorable squeals merged seamlessly with the screams of the woman in the cage. “*Kyaaa! Waaaaah!*”

High above in the cage, the decoration, once known as the vampire Anastasia, blinked back tears to watch the scene unfold as Neviya gave the two maids a sound spanking. *Why…why do they act like I don’t exist?* thought Anastasia.

***

Anastasia remembered lying on Queen Deruella's bed, bound and gagged, as the Vampire Queen nipped her. "Hmmm, you taste nice, girl...How about another bite?"

Anastasia struggled to speak behind her gag, but her moan was an unmistakable "Yes!"

Deruella licked a trickle of blood from the bitemark on Anastasia's flesh. "You've never shared a bed with someone else before? Such a sad life...Too bad most of our kind die without having known the true pleasure of life. The pleasure you shall enjoy from now on...if you renounce Rusalka and become my slave..."

Anastasia's eyes shone bright. "*Hmmmmph!*"

"Hehe, good girl. Now, another bite at your boobs—Or do you want me to stop punishing you?"

Anastasia shivered with pleasure as she felt the next nip at her nipple.

Then another woman's whiny voice interrupted. Carmilla, the First Bride of Deruella, was restrained in an X-shaped cross, her dark rouge-pink hair tumbling down, perfectly framing her bare torso. "Please! Master! Punish me as well!"

Deruella sighed. "I am punishing you, Carmilla. I'm still very, very annoyed at you. So, for quite a while, I shall bed someone else, while you shall be kept like that. Feel free to watch though."

Carmilla shook her head, wailing like a spoiled girl: "MASTER!!! *AHHHH*—"

***

For weeks, Anastasia had enjoyed Deruella's company nightly, before finally daring to hope that she might be made a favored bride of the Queen. As a servant of Rusalka, Anastasia had already had a taste of rising in the ranks to achieve power. If only

she could offer Deruella some sort of grand token of appreciation...a gift worthy of a Queen?

As Anastasia strolled the gardens, she spotted a group of servants standing in a circle, with their faces against the trunk of a thick oak tree. *How odd?* thought Anastasia. As she approached, she noticed an adult slave with black hair, bent over the lap of a much younger girl. The girl had her green hair styled in two ponytails, much like Deruella, and wore a simple white dress. Then there was a resounding *smack*, and Anastasia realized the girl was merrily spanking the slave. "Naughty, naughty! You know better than to say bad words in front of Mommy! Now, Mommy has to spank you!"

The slave groaned and grunted, but the little girl seemed determined to make a lasting impact. "Mommy hopes this spanking is teaching you a lesson. Are you sorry yet?"

The slave wailed as she felt a flurry of furious *spanks*. "Yes! I'm sorry, Mommy!"

The girl patted the slave's bottom. "Good girl. Mommy forgives you. Now go stand in timeout with your sisters. And no rubbing your naughty little bottom, or you'll get more spankies!"

"Sigh…yes, Mommy." The slave pouted and lifted herself off the little girl's lap.

Anastasia cleared her throat to announce herself and strolled into the garden. "What goes on here?"

The green-haired girl hopped to her feet. "Oh! Lady Deruella gave me some of my favorite girls to be my friends to play house with. They are the children, and I am the mommy!"

"Lady Deruella? You mean Queen Deruella. You mustn't neglect to use her proper title!"

The little girl's eyes went wide. "Ooh! You're right. She asks me to call her Lady Deruella when it's reading time, but Queen Deruella everywhere else. Thank you, I forgot!"

Anastasia took a closer look at the girl and recognized her necklace as bearing the royal sigil of Queen Deruella, a mark of her personal protection. "Who are you? Are you...a concubine of Queen Deruella?"

The girl giggled. "No, silly! I'm Talila. I'm not a concubine! She calls me a..." Talila turned to the slaves standing in timeout. "...Hold on, what is the word for what I am?"

"You are the Royal Ward of Queen Deruella," answered the black-haired slave neutrally.

Talila nodded. "Yes, that's right! Queen Deruella says that I'm to be a Royal Lady one day soon...Hey! Hold on!"

In a huff, Talila rounded on the slave and *smacked* her bottom. "You know you're not supposed to talk in timeout! It's against the rules!"

The slave only tensed slightly. “Yes, Mommy. I’m sorry for my stupidity. Please, spank me soundly, to teach me better.”

Talila shrugged and patted the slave’s bottom. “Ok. Mommy forgives you. I will give you your spanking after I say goodbye to the Queen’s new wife.”

Anastasia felt her chest swell at hearing herself referred to as Deruella’s wife. “Why, thank you. I am The Lady Anastasia. But you may just call me Anastasia.”

“Would you like to be my Mommy?”

“Excuse me?”

Talila gestured to the slaves standing in timeout. “For a game of house! It’s an easy game. The girls do something naughty, and the Mommy spanks them, to teach them to do better. I’m usually the Mommy, but I’d like to be one of the daughters sometimes. You can just pretend to spank me, but

Queen Deruella says it's okay to spank the slaves for any reason."

Anastasia smiled. "I would be honored to be your mother."

***

Anastasia was thrilled. She had prepared something special to please Queen Deruella: a daughter. Once she had given Talila the gift of vampirism, the royal ward would forever remain as she was now, an adorable, precocious girl.

As Deruella entered their bedchamber, Anastasia leapt to her feet. "I have a surprise for you! To honor the anniversary of my entering your service..."

Anastasia held Talila by the shoulders, nudging her forward. Talila's face was pale, her eyes unblinking.

Anastasia brushed Talila's cheek gently and bent low to kiss her. "...This shall be our first child! She's

the perfect age. We shall both be her mother, for all eternity, raising her as our—"

Deruella slapped Anastasia across the face. "Foolish wench! That is my Royal Ward! I didn't give you permission to create a thrall!"

"But...I created loyal servants for Lord Rusalka all the time! I thought—"

"I didn't bring you to my bedchamber because I wanted you to think. Rusalka was a fool, making armies of lesser vampires. I raise up a new vampire only when I deem it the right time. But you? You've taken liberties. You dared to touch my ward! Dared to break my favorite toy! Dared to harm this girl, who will never grow up now!"

Anastasia stammered and dropped to her knees, hugging Talila tight. "I...I never meant any harm. Talila is such a wonderful child. I loved her so much that I thought she should stay like this forever! I thought we could love her...together!"

Deruella looked down at Anastasia with disgust. "That's another thing...you dared to think of yourself as my first wife? I was already getting bored of you. But in your hubris, you sought to claim sole possession of me, your Goddess."

"I...I'm so sorry, Mistress!"

Deruella's eyes were empty. "No. You're not sorry. Not yet."

The cage had been fashioned for Anastasia that evening. After she was stuffed inside, it had been sealed shut, without a door. Then the cage was raised by a chain to dangle over a fire pit, and Anastasia's ordeal began.

As a vampire, she was immortal. No humble fire could kill her, but as the bars grew hot, she had just enough room to dance.

Anastasia wailed and forced herself to reach through the iron bars, desperately waving to Deruella. "Please! I won't do it again!"

But Deruella didn't even look at her.

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Days turned into weeks.

After kicking her feet endlessly, Anastasia grew so tired she couldn't move her legs and could only stand, the soles of her feet and palms of her hands burning, before she finally lacked the strength to stand. The moment she sat down, she recoiled at the burning touch of the metal, before succumbing fully to her exhaustion. The cage was so tight she did not have enough space to lie down and was forced to squat. As she pressed her weight down fully on her plump buttocks, they sizzled exactly like two juicy hams roasting over the fire. After a few hours, Anastasia gained a second wind, then sprang back to her feet.

Then weeks turned into months.

Court painters and artisans who visited the castle of Deruella often noted the strange decoration that

overhung her throne room, and the eternally dancing woman trapped within. Anastasia was even depicted in the woven tapestry that decorated one of the castle walls. The artist had emphasized the dancer's agony and given her a prominent place in the composition. Today, Anastasia was sitting slumped in her burning cage, her buttocks sizzling beneath her. Even vampires needed to sleep.

Deruella gave strict instructions that the fire should always be kept low. If Anastasia was ever burned to the point of scarring, the fire would be lowered again, but never allowed to die out. Then Anastasia's vampiric healing would restore her flesh to its original state.

The first few sleepless weeks in the cage had come closer to killing her than the heat ever could, but when exhaustion from her endless dance finally overtook her, she collapsed and entered her first, fitful sleep. Fortunately, when vampires sleep, they enter a state like death, without dreams or any

feeling. So whenever Anastasia finally managed to fall asleep, she could at least stay asleep for a few weeks. But by the time she woke up, her back and buttocks, and whatever flesh was touching the iron cage, was always fried to the color of a crisp, juicy red apple. Then she would leap to her feet and begin her dance again, and her vampiric gift would slowly heal the burned flesh.

Anastasia felt a staff prodding her awake and spotted two women. She recognized the first woman as Lady Carmilla, First Wife of Queen Deruella. Without a word, Carmilla began to prod the coals beneath the cage to stoke the fire.

The second was an elven woman clad in a green loincloth and bikini armor, which perfectly matched the color of her hair. Anastasia didn't recognize the second woman at first, but something about her was strikingly familiar. "Talila?"

The unknown lady shook her head, strolling around the cage to stand behind Anastasia. "No.

I'm Solana. Talila is my little sister. And thanks to you, she'll be my little sister for all eternity now. I won't get to see her grow up."

Anastasia recoiled from the bars as she felt the heat slowly rising around her. "I...I only thought—"

Solana pulled a thorny whip from her side and lashed it expertly, aiming a diagonal stroke across Anastasia's lower back and upper buttocks. "No excuses. No apologies. No words will ever undo what you did. You're just like Rusalka."

With a *whoop*, Anastasia jumped up and began her foolish dance. It wasn't so much a proper dance as a futile effort to avoid touching any of the hot metal bars for too long. Sometimes, when the fire was low, Anastasia could manage to get a few seconds of relief. But then the slaves would kindle a stronger fire, and there would be no escape.

Anastasia felt tears in her eyes. “I’m sorry! I never wanted to work for Rusalka! She turned me against my will!”

Carmilla waved her hand, and there was a flash of eerie light. Suddenly, Anastasia felt herself being yanked back against the hot metal of the cage, as if she was held in place by invisible hands. Carmilla reached through the bars and stroked her long, pointed nails along Anastasia’s exposed breasts. “Now, Solana, you really shouldn’t bother talking to this thing. After all, it’s not capable of repentance. It’s not really sorry. It only feels sorry for itself.”

Anastasia shook her head. “No! I am sorry! Truly! I regret—”

Carmilla dug her nails into Anastasia’s flesh, slowly tracing long, thin scratches along her breasts. “Why not try aiming a few strokes at its tits? It may only be a decoration, but that’s sure to provoke an entertaining reaction.”

Solana started to spiral her whip in a figure-eight pattern. “And what if I lash your hand by mistake?”

“I’m sure your aim will be true.”

Solana grinned. “So be it!”

Solana snapped the whip, and Anastasia saw everything as if the world was in slow motion, before the leather tip cracked across her exposed tit.

As Anastasia screamed, Carmilla tightened her grip, holding Anastasia’s breasts in place to make an easy target. After Solana landed the second blow across Anastasia’s other tit, the elven maid scowled. “Turn her around. I’d like to work over her fat ass.”

Carmilla sighed, clucking her tongue. “Don’t refer to the decoration as her. It’s not proper grammar. Queen Deruella herself has given the order. The decoration is not to be spoken to.”

The second Carmilla released her hold on Anastasia, she reactivated her magic and spun

Anastasia around in her cage to present her backside to the whip. For a moment, Solana looked nervous at the mention of Deruella. But she quickly found her rhythm after delivering the first *lash* across Anastasia's buttocks. After another 30 lashes, Solana wound up her whip. "That will do. Let it rot in its cage."

Anastasia sniveled. "I...I'm sorry."

Solana stiffened before putting her whip away. "Come on, we have other prisoners to prepare for display."

Tears spilled down Anastasia's face. She had never exactly grown used to the pain, but after the first year of continual burning, it had started to become more like an annoying itch.

Anastasia wasn't crying because of the fresh scars. Those would heal. She was crying because she wished they would acknowledge her words. Even a

rejection of her apology would have been better than ignoring her.

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Two tamed demonesses were escorted into the chamber and placed in pillories made of solid ice. Both had leathery wings, like bats. One had the white hair of an albino, while the other had hair the color of wheat. Their bodies were those of ordinary women, but whereas the albino was tall and slender, the blond had a plump, curvy build. Nevertheless, both had soft, shapely breasts and buttocks.

The two demonesses hissed softly as the slaves stripped them of their loincloths, but both obediently took their place. The albino demoness trembled with fear, like a cowed puppy, while the straw-haired demoness seemed eager, almost hungry for what came next.

The servants laid out a line of birch bundles for guests, who lined up to chastise the two trapped

she-devils. The albino demoness whined at the sight, but the second demoness licked her lips.

As a crowd gathered to flog the two demonesses, they all passed by Anastasia's cage. As the albino demoness felt the first stroke of the birch bundle across her bottom, she writhed like a wild animal, kicking and straining at her restraints, before the birching continued.

The blond demoness snarled as she craned her neck to watch. "No! Not her! Me first!"

By the time it was over, the albino's bottom was covered in fiery red marks. The second guest in line picked up a birch bundle and continued the punishment right where the first had left off.

As the first guest strolled across the throne room to punish the second demoness, she screeched with impatience. "Yes! Punish me just like you did for her, only harder!"

As the first guest slammed the birches across her bottom, the blond demon squealed, but her voice was strangely joyful when compared to that of her albino companion.

As Anastasia overheard the guests milling beneath her, she smiled. Although plenty of guests paused to flog the two demonesses, sooner or later all eyes in the room fell on her.

After all, no matter how soundly the two demons were birched, their cries never had that true quality of agony and despair. There could be no imitating the pain that marked the voice of the dancer in her cage. Anastasia discovered that, in some strange, perverted way, she was proud of this fact.

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Months turned into years.

Though Anastasia's agonies never ended, they somehow became...boring. Fewer and fewer people even bothered to look at the dancer in her cage. The

legend of the woman of the cage was told and retold until it became a dull point of historical trivia. No one was surprised to see Anastasia anymore when they entered Queen Deruella's throne room.

Years turned into decades.

A second tapestry had been woven to complement the first. But in the second, later tapestry, the entire cage was only given a small place in the background. The exhausted figure in the cage seemed to have been added by the artist as an afterthought. Clearly, after a century or so, Queen Deruella's infamous decoration had lost some of its lustre.

Anastasia started awake as one of the handmaidens prodded her with the end of a feather duster. As Anastasia blinked, she noticed that the maids had nearly allowed the fire to go out. Her backside only felt slightly toasty.

At that moment, Anastasia remembered the little draconic girl that used to torment her. How

Anastasia had hated that little fire-breather! But the pet had been taken away weeks ago to prepare for the coming ceremony, perhaps to keep from lighting any royal guests on fire. *Poor little thing...I hope I see it again. At least I could talk to it, even if it couldn't understand me,* thought Anastasia.

Below her, the black-haired maid furiously added coals to the dying fire. "If anyone finds out we forgot to tend the fire last night, we might be the ones stuck in this cage!" she hissed as she stoked the fire.

The blue-haired maid giggled as she dusted the cage, not even looking at Anastasia. "It will be fine. It is supposed to be a low fire, after all."

"Well then, I'm sure you won't mind telling Queen Deruella yourself. I'm sure she'll be thrilled."

The blue-haired maid swallowed, then pulled a tankard from her belt. "I don't think we should bother the Queen with such minor household

matters. Let's just get...the decoration...ready for the triumphal celebration."

With a soft sigh, Anastasia allowed herself to be dusted. Then the blue-haired maid handed her the tankard without looking at her. The maid kept her mouth tight shut, clearly not wanting to break the Queen's rule by mistake.

When the maids had first been brought on, Anastasia had tried to talk to them, even flirt with them, but had long ago given up on ever getting a response.

Anastasia drank the contents of the tankard: pig's blood. It was tasteless and barely enough to satisfy her vampiric urges, but at least she wouldn't starve. As the maid took back her empty tankard, Anastasia thought about how easy it would be to grab the girl through the iron bars and drink her blood. But Anastasia didn't feel like moving.

As both maids finished stoking the fire beneath her, Anastasia stood with a jolt and cradled herself.

A few decades ago, she had often heard herself being referred to only as "The Dancer." In recent years, she was only ever referred to as "the decoration," if at all.

Her name as "The Dancer" had always been a cruel irony. Anastasia's "dance" had only been hopping in place, kicking her knees in a desperate effort to relieve the pain. The cage barely allowed her enough range of motion to spin in a circle. But as the door opened and Queen Deruella entered, Anastasia began to dance. Not the absurd jerking and kicking of a tortured soul. But a real dance.

Carmilla strode behind Queen Deruella. "We've finished annexing the last of Rusalka's strongholds, Your Majesty. After the triumph of your final campaign, all that is left is to clean up the stragglers."

“And how is Rusalka adjusting to her new accommodations?”

“She is furious. Keeps making demands that you come and treat with her for peace. Perhaps she’s attempting to put on a bold front, but I think she’s gone mad.”

“We’ll have to devise something special for her…something…poetic.”

Anastasia spun on her feet, ignoring the rising heat, and flourished her hands with grace that had come from decades of practice. Then the bars beneath her began to glow red, and Anastasia gave herself over fully to the dance. By that point, it was not as if she had a choice.

But for a moment, something caught Queen Deruella’s eye, and she glanced up to watch Anastasia’s dance.

Carmilla blinked, not even registering the sight of the dancing woman in the cage. “Your Majesty? Is something the matter?”

Queen Deruella shook her head and took her place on the throne. “Just admiring the decoration.”

As tears flew from Anastasia’s eyes, she continued to perform the most elegant dance of her life, every motion fluid and precise. As the hot metal pressed against the soles of her feet, she blocked out all the pain, making lively steps in time to the music played by the court musicians below. Despite the narrow confines, she managed to glide, her motions reminiscent of a bird in flight. So elegant was Anastasia’s dance, the bars seemed to be nothing to her.

But though the gathering crowd might occasionally glance at the decoration, no one watched for long.

The End